
The Generous Attachment;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS

*The Author of this Play
died Nov^r 1797*

The Gentlemen's Attachment;

A COMEDY

K

2 T O



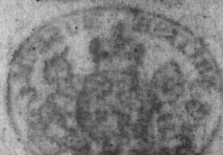
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THE
GENEROUS ATTACHMENT;

A COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS,

BY GEORGE SMYTHE. *K*



"Vos eritis Judices,
"Laudine, an vitio, duci factum id oporteat."

TII.

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1796.

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GENEROUS ATTACHMENT:

A COMEDY

IN FIVE ACTS

BY GEORGE SMYTHE



Printed by J. G. Smith, at the British Museum Press, London.

1881

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ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

THE Author of the following Play is conscious that some apology may be required, by his readers in general, for the publication of a Drama which has not received the sanction of public approbation by its previous appearance on the stage.

He therefore thinks it necessary to premise, as an excuse for the deficiencies that may be discovered in his performance, that it was first undertaken as an amusement, to beguile the lingering hours during the continuance of a long-protracted gout, which has, for a considerable time past, absolutely fixed him in his elbow-chair, and even prevented his hand from performing the office of being secretary to his head,

Though it originated in amusement, he does not scruple to acknowledge that the claims of a rising family have operated as an additional incentive to the prosecution of his design; and have made him look forward with greater pleasure to the time of its completion.

Fully sensible, however, that a printed work must be judged by its own intrinsic merits, rather than the motives

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

motives and intentions of its author, he ventures to hope that his piece will not be found very greatly deficient in its claims on the attention of the public.

As he lives at a distance from the Metropolis, is destitute of the interests, and ignorant of the arts, by which the success of his Play might be promoted on the London Stage; he has given up all thoughts of its theatrical representation. But the advice of some of his friends (too partially inclined perhaps) have, at length, induced him to publish it by subscription; and he hopes he has not erred, under the circumstances which have been previously detailed, in acceding to their recommendations.

Such as it is, then, he now gives it to the world; and to the world he looks with the unpresuming hope of experiencing that candour and lenity of criticism which is seldom denied to a first literary attempt.

To his Subscribers he turns with equal solicitude to obtain approbation; and with the warmer feelings of private gratitude and particular respect, he entreats them to accept his public acknowledgments for the liberal patronage they have afforded, as well as for that honor and credit which the appearance of so many respectable names have conferred on himself and his performance.

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N. B. The Author begs leave to apologise to some Subscribers who kindly favoured him with their Names, but which were sent too late for insertion, the Play, at that time, being entirely printed off.

PROLOGUE TO THE GENEROUS ATTACHMENT,

BY THE AUTHOR.

Spoken in the Character of the Author.

UNKNOWN, and shrinking from the public view,
I little thought of this appeal to you,
That I should e'er at your tribunal stand,
With anxious look and supplicating hand,
T' implore that mercy which is ever shewing
To him whose fault can scarce be call'd his own.
Have patience, gentle Sirs, and you shall know
The reason WHY and WHEREFORE I do so;
The genuine truth I'll tell, upon my life—
This Play was written, then, to please my Wife.
“To please his wife?” yon grey-beard Cynic cries,
“I'll not believe him, there the fellow lies;
“To please a wife, a pretty task indeed;
“I've try'd for twenty years, but can't succeed;
“My temper, too, for mildness quite uncommon,
“But all must own my wife's a fractious woman,
“For ever teasing, I'm for ever teaz'd,
“Whilst she is never, never to be pleas'd.
Pardon, good Sir, to me your wife's unknown;
I only meant to speak about my own;
At her request I really once more say
I wrote this stupid, sentimental Play;
And, if you'll deign to hear th' unvarnish'd tale,
I'll tell you how the Syren did prevail.—
One morn, at breakfast, thus she says to me,
Smiling, and pouring out the grateful tea,
“I dreamt last night; (nay, laugh not at me, love)
“For dreams I've heard you say descend from Jove;
“Compos'd, at my request—what shall I say?
“ (Waking I durst not urge it)—a new Play;
“Yet, really, I dreamt it had vast merit,
“And, dreaming, quite enjoy'd your ease and spirit,

" Admir'd your plot, your fancy, and your wit,
 " And dreamt the Play would ev'ry humour hit.
 " This morn my dream arises to my view,
 " The realizing which belongs to you."
 Thus ran she on, whilst I (the tea-cup drain'd)
 Assum'd an anger which was only feign'd.
 What ME, cry'd I, to please a dreaming wife,
 ME write a Play?—I can't upon my life;
 I cannot gratify your inclination,
 Quite at the hazard of my own damnation.
 At this she started, and a silent tear
 Dropt from where never more may one appear.
 " Bless me," she said, "you're diffident indeed,
 " Write but the Play, it will, it shall succeed;
 " If it should fail, throw all the blame on me,
 " What is it I did not suffer, love, for thee?
 " Think of the reputation you'd acquire,
 " And think you'd gratify my first desire:
 " Besides the fame, a Play much profit brings,
 " And three third nights would make us rich as kings;
 " A generous audience shall protect your Play,
 " Their smiles and mine the toil will over-pay.
 " Should they condemn, their sentence won't be hard;
 " If they approve, you'll gain a rich reward."
 Thus did the flatt'rer catch my list'ning ear,
 And this the reason, Sirs, that I am here.
 Then, for a Lady's sake, my errors spare,
 Such mutual love, in days like these, is rare;
 As my first venture, then, oh let me court
 Your fost'ring aid to give the brat support.
 Should its too num'rous faults offend the eye,
 Close it good-natur'dly and pass some by;
 My next attempt, perhaps, may not displease,
 And *present kindness* give me *future ease*.
 Awake some Genius, and improve that style
 Which now can scarce, I doubt—*deserve a smile*.

DRAMATIS PERSONA

MEN

LORD MEXINGTON, Governor of the Province
GENERAL DANVERS
MR. MORTIMER
MR. CONYERS, Attorney and Henry Lord High
MR. L. GARRARD, Esq.
CAPTAIN NEVILLE, A Gentleman in the Household
Adopted by General Danvers
WILLIAM, an old Soldier, and companion of Danvers
General Danvers



WOMEN

LADY MEXINGTON, Governor's Wife
MRS. MORTIMER
MRS. DANVERS
MRS. CONYERS
MRS. L. GARRARD
MRS. NEVILLE
MRS. WILLIAM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

LORD MEXINGTON, *afterwards Duke of Powerscourt.*

GENERAL DANVERS.

MR. MORTIMER.

MR. CONYERS, *Nephew and Heir to Lord Mexington.*

MR. LASCELLES, *his Friend.*

CAPTAIN NEVILLE, *Nephew to Mr. Mortimer,
adopted by General Danvers.*

WILLIAM, *an old Soldier, and confidential Servant to
General Danvers.*

SPRUCE, *Gentleman to Do.*

MR. BENSON, *Gentleman to Lord Mexington.*

WOMEN.

LADY MEXINGTON, *afterwards Duchess of Powers-
court.*

MRS. MORTIMER.

MISS DANVERS, *Daughter to the General.*

MISS THORNTON, *(really DORMER) Niece to Lady
Mexington.*

MRS. HARRISON, *Housekeeper to General Danvers.*

(2)

The Generous Attachment.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE.—A Dressing Room in Mr. Mortimer's House.

[Mr. Mortimer without, speaking to a Servant]

Mr. Mort. Where's your Lady? Where's Mrs. Mortimer?

Enter Mrs. Mortimer.

Oh my dear Mrs. Mortimer, I am come to bring you the happiest piece of information.

Mrs. Mort. And suppose you are, Mr. Mortimer, there is not the least occasion for all this noise and uproar; here have you now, by your boisterous intrusion, disturbed my mind from the delightful tract of sensibility it was thrown into, from musing o'er the distresses of the charming Emily, in that exquisite production of female genius the *Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Mr. Mort. I wish, Mrs. Mortimer, you would extend your feelings of sensibility, to living objects as well as fancied woes, and imaginary distresses.

Mrs. Mort. Why, so I do, Sir; you yourself are a living object of my sensibility, every day of my life.

Mr. Mort. How so, my dear?

Mrs.

Mrs. Mort. Why—When ten thousand rapturous ideas are floating on my imagination, and I am building castles in the air with the man I could love, with a total forgetfulness of the man I am married to—you, Mr. Mortimer, by your want of decorum, and tumultuous precipitation, entirely derange my finest feelings, totally annihilate every intellectual faculty, and from the regions of delight to which I was ascending, bring me down to a level with the inhabitants of this world, and only to consider myself as plain Mrs. Mortimer.

Mr. Mort. And if you were only to consider yourself as plain Mrs. Mortimer, my dear, I believe no one who knows you, would accuse your consideration of telling a falsity.

Mrs. Mort. By the sly cast of your countenance, Mr. Mortimer, I conclude you conceive yourself witty in your last speech; but I assure you, Sir, I pay no regard to personal allusions.

Mr. Mort. Nay, forgive me, my dear, I only wished to make you descend a little, and from soaring the regions of fancy, to walk the plain paths of common sense, which when you condescend to do, I really do not know a more sensible, or more amiable woman than yourself.

Mrs. Mort. Oh! your servant Sir, a compliment from you is so entirely unexpected.

Mr. Mort. It ought not, my dear; consider your intercourse with the man you could love, and forgetting the man you was married to just now.

Mrs. Mort. Pshaw—that was in idea only.

Mr. Mort. Well then I will not entertain another idea about it; but proceed, if you please, to communicate the information I meant to give, when I intruded so abruptly upon you.

Mrs. Mort. Dear Mr. Mortimer, you cannot think how much a little suavity of disposition and good breeding becomes you; you are now the very
man

man I wish to love; but pardon my interruption, I am impatient to hear.

Mr. Mort. Then I am happy to inform you, my nephew, my dear George, the orphan son of my beloved sister, this morning landed at Portsmouth from on board the Ganges, which ship arrived last week in the Downs, after a very hazardous voyage from Bengal.

Mrs. Mort. As this is an event in which I am sure you feel yourself extremely interested, Mr. Mortimer, I most sincerely wish you joy; and shall be happy to add my congratulations to your own, on the safe arrival of your nephew. When do you expect him?

Mr. Mort. Not till to-morrow, my dear; he comes to town with his generous patron my old friend General Danvers, who arrived in the same ship.

Mrs. Mort. Pray how old is Mr. Neville?

Mr. Mort. About two and twenty: ten years since his amiable mother (my now sainted sister) followed the fortune of her husband, Captain Neville, to the east, from whom she could no longer brook a separation, which had then continued upwards of three years; she carried her son with her; I would fain have prevailed with my sister to leave George behind to my care, but could not.

Mrs. Mort. Indeed, my dear, I do not wonder at that, I am sure I should have acted just as Mrs. Neville did.

Mr. Mort. On my sister's arrival, she found her adored Neville had, about a month before, paid the last debt of human nature; a fever, the common calamity of the country, which no skill could alleviate or medicine subdue, had deprived her of the tenderest of husbands. On his death bed he most pathetically recommended his Eliza and her son (on their arrival) to his beloved friend General Danvers,

until they could return to my protection. Alas! that protection my dearest sister never claimed: In less than six weeks she followed her husband to the grave, notwithstanding every attention the humane General could possibly give or bestow.

Mrs. Mort. Good God! my dear Mr. Mortimer, how I sympathize in the fate of your brother and sister. But what followed their unhappy deaths? What steps were taken in behalf of your orphan nephew?

Mr. Mort. The tears you are now shedding, Mrs. Mortimer, prove you a woman of true sensibility. The General wrote me an account of the melancholy event, and mentioned as he was to be stationary for some years in India, and had lately the misfortune to lose Mrs. Danvers, it would be a comfort and satisfaction to him, from the sincere regard he ever had for poor Neville, to take charge of his orphan son: that he would manage his small fortune to the best advantage; and, as his inclination led, he should either pursue his father's steps in the field, or be placed out with a reputable merchant; but in either situation the General wished to be considered as having his interest entirely left to himself; and declared he should ever share his favor and affection with his only daughter Matilda, whom he had, on his quitting England, left to my care and protection.

Mrs. Mort. What, my dear, is that charming girl you introduced to me the other day, at Bromley, the General's daughter?

Mr. Mort. She is; and, for goodness, the exact counterpart of her most excellent father: I was a bachelor for many years after I was entrusted with so precious a charge, so placed Matilda under the care of a most amiable woman at Bromley, where she has continued ever since in a constant state of improvement. She is now eighteen, and perfectly accomplished. I meant, if the General had not arrived,

arrived, to have brought her to this house; but first was desirous you should see and converse with her, that if, on farther knowledge of my ward, you should think of her as I did, you would, of your own accord, offer her your tenderest protection.

Mrs. Mort. Which I most assuredly should have done, Mr. Mortimer, and am almost angry at the General's arrival, as it prevents Miss Danvers from accepting, what would have yielded me the highest gratification. But go on with your story.

Mr. Mort. Well, my dear, as I had the firmest reliance on the General's honor, I submitted the care of George to him in every particular; reserving to myself the pleasure of corresponding with him, and of assuring him he had my truest love and regard, and a nephew's undoubted claim for a large share of my fortune.

Mrs. Mort. To be sure, if you should have no family of your own, my love.

Mr. Mort. Oh that indeed would make an alteration; depend upon it Mrs. Mortimer, you, nor any family I may be blest with, shall ever have reason to doubt my attention to their happiness.

Mrs. Mort. I have no doubts, Mr. Mortimer, but long most exceedingly to see this beloved nephew, and his amiable patron General Danvers; I hope they will take up their abode with us, and will instantly give orders for their reception.

Mr. Mort. Stay, my dear—The General in his last letter, which was filled with praises of George, who has already obtained a company by his conduct and gallantry, (the army being the only service he could endure) commissioned me to take a house for him in my neighbourhood; I have accordingly hired one close by us, which is nearly fit for his reception; and I must trouble you to look out for a proper housekeeper for him.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mort. Willingly. But surely, my dear, your nephew at least will stay some time with us on his arrival?

Mr. Mort. Most certainly, as will the General.— But come, my love, to receive a friend and a nephew, from a real friend and an uncle, needs little preparation: I am so truly delighted with George's arrival and the kind interest you take in it, that I never was happier. If you are at leisure this morning, and will permit me to attend you in the chariot to Bond-street, I have an hundred and fifty guineas in my purse which you will do me infinite pleasure in converting into gold or silver chains, Armenian turbans, muslin robes, straw ornaments, and esprit feathers, or whatever else the polite gallery of fashion may sanctify for the adornment of the ladies.

Mrs. Mort. Dear Mr. Mortimer, your proposition so infinitely charms me, that I will attend you with the utmost pleasure: ah, my sweet husband, I see you are a man of sensibility after all; but you forget, silver chains, since I have had the pleasure of wearing those of wedlock, are for me entirely out of character.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE.—*Hotel St. James's Street.*

Enter General Danvers and Captain Neville.

Gen. Dan. Well, my dear George, we are at length arrived, after various difficulties and dangers, once more in Old England; in which hospitable country, believe me, you shall equally share in my regard and fortune with the daughter of my truest affection.

Capt. Nev. Indeed, my dearest Sir, you overwhelm me with repeated obligations. The small
pittance

pittance I received on the death of my ever-to-be regretted parents, you have more than ten fold expended upon my education and promotion ; to this I can and must submit, on the constant assurance of your affection and regard, but I cannot to accumulated obligations ; had I the least want, I am confident I have a claim on my uncle Mortimer's bounty.

Gen. Dan. No doubt of it, George, and so has every worthy character on the affluent ; but whether the claim will be admitted or not is another thing.

Capt. Nev. I am sure, Sir, you do not include Mr. Mortimer in this view,

Gen. Dan. By no means, I only meant to say I pledged myself to my dearest friend your father, on his death bed, never to forsake you ; and may God forget me if ever I do, until you shew yourself unworthy my esteem and protection.

Capt. Nev. My honored, noble, generous benefactor.

Gen. Dan. Pshaw, a truce with compliments, my boy, and now for your uncle.

Scene continues.

Enter a Waiter to General Danvers.

Waiter. Sir, a gentleman of the name of Mortimer desires to see you.

Gen. Dan. Shew him up.

Enter Mr. Mortimer.

Mr. Mort. My dear General, I rejoice to see you. Welcome, ten thousand times welcome to England : George, my beloved Nephew, come to the arms of an Uncle who has long regretted your absence, and was never happier than at your return.

Capt. Nev. My dearest Sir, my heart beats with the warmest gratitude at the kindness of your reception.

Gen.

Gen. Dan. Ah, my friend, how happy am I to see you, and still more so at my bringing to you a nephew every way worthy your truest affection: but how is my dear girl, my sweet Matilda?

Mr. Mort. Well and happy, General, in hourly expectation of being blest with the sight of her father. Had you arrived three days later, you would have found her at my house; at present she is at Bromley: but come my old friend, come my dear George, your aunt, Mrs. Mortimer, longs to see you; I have changed my condition since last I saw you, General, and am become the happy husband.

Gen. Dan. I give you joy, my friend, I give you joy with all my heart; I once was blest in that situation, and can truly say found it a state of the most perfect felicity: George, do you attend your uncle, I will just pay a short visit to my kinsman, Lord Mexington, and join you at dinner; I long to see Mrs. Mortimer, and enjoy my old friend's company, and to-morrow, dear Mortimer, you must attend me to my daughter.

Mr. Mort. With pleasure, General. Come my dear George.

[*Exeunt Neville and Mortimer.*]

Scene continued.

Gen. Dan. William.

Enter William.

Wm. Sir.

Gen. Dan. Do you and Spruce get yourselves ready, and attend me to Lord Mexington's directly.

Wm. We are both ready, your honor.

Gen. Dan. I mean dress'd and powdered, Sir,

Wm. Why we are drest, your honor, but as for powder, nobody wears it now a days.

Gen. Dan. No—Why not?

Wm. Why it is forbidden, your honor, because they say it robs the poor of many a good meal.

Gen.

Gen. Dan. Does it so, why then that shall be a rule with me ever to go without it.

Wm. Yes, your honor, it is down by proclamation; even us soldiers are not permitted to wear it; it is thought by our gracious King, that the flour it is made of would do more good in the mouths of those that want it, than on the heads of those who don't.

Gen. Dan. Bravo, William; there is for the lesson of humanity you have taught me; from henceforward I discard powder for ever.

Wm. But yet, your honor, I heard at Mr. Mortimer's, that any one, by paying a sum of money, may have leave to powder his or her hair or wig as often as they please.

Gen. Dan. Why this, now, is as it should be; this is a tax merely on frivolity and luxury, it falls not on a single head that wishes to avoid it; for my own part I doubt its being effective, and for the honor of Englishmen I hope it will not. The prohibition I can see every reason for, not so for the pecuniary licence (whatever is particularly wrong and injurious in itself, should never be tolerated by any palliation whatever). However, I must think that measure a lenient one, which leaves the subject the option of a refusal to comply with it; for myself and family I am determined to take out this licence, but by no means to take the benefit of it. No—I have too often seen the sad consequences of scarcity in India to be in the least accessory to it in my native country.

Wm. Indeed, your honor, I have heard, since my arrival, that the poor people in this country are almost starved.

Gen. Dan. That's impossible, William, whilst the English (and I trust they will ever do so) retain the sentiments of Englishmen. Distresses and difficulties in all countries will sometimes arise, from providential causes and unforeseen casualties, which no human

foresight can possibly prevent ; but for true beneficence, exemplary charity, and the most unbounded inclination to relieve the wants of their fellow creatures, the generosity of this country has ever afforded the most noble and striking examples.

Wm. God bless your honor ! I hear, likewise, that the parliament and the great folks are all now laying their heads together to introduce peace and plenty once more amongst us, and then I hope all disturbances will be at an end, and every thing jog on just as it used to do.

Gen. Dan. Upon my honor, William, from an old soldier you are changed to a most profound politician. From your long and faithful services I have ever indulged you with the liberty of speaking your sentiments, and you now, I believe, claim almost a prescriptive right of doing so. Depend upon it, William, all will end as it should do, for whenever the government of a country feels, and is anxious to alleviate the misery of the wretched, I defy any enemy, foreign or domestic, either to subdue or change it.

Wm. As for subduing it, your honor, upon my soul I don't think that possible to be done.

Gen. Dan. And as for changing it, William, the whole world cannot produce such another. The scarcity of grain, which we now so much deplore, is more than half of it self-created : in England, as in the East, we are curst with a set of miscreants, who speculate on the bounties of Providence, who avariciously hoard up the supply which a benignant being hath given for the support of man, and taking double, nay even treble advantage of necessity arising, perhaps, from one unproductive harvest, refuse to part with a single kernel, until those to whom the blessing is most essential, are not able to purchase or procure it. But, thank heaven, the infamous speculator already sees his infernal schemes are blasted, whilst

whilst the miserably sordid farmer, with his loaded granary, who, even to his own labourers, refused (at the smallest abatement) the means of support for themselves and families, shrinks abashed from the view of his fellow creatures, and feels an accumulated evil in the loss he must inevitably sustain, and the universal scorn and contempt he must be held in by his neighbours and the world.

Wm. I am sure he richly deserves it, and please your honor.

Gen. Dan. True, William, and much more; but to his own conscience we will commit him, the severest punisher of the most depraved of human hearts. But it grows late, so call a coach and attend me to Lord Mexington's.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

4 AP 54

ACT

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE.—*A Library in Lord Mexington's House.*
Lord and Lady Mexington at Breakfast, Lady Mex-
ington reading a Newspaper.

Enter a Servant, who delivers a Card to Lord Mex-
ington on a Waiter.

Lady Mex. These papers inform me, my Lord, that your Lordship's kinsman, General Danvers, is arrived from India.

Lord Mex. They do, my Lady, and this card confirms it, and says, moreover, he will have the honor to pay his devoirs to your Ladyship and myself this very morning.

Lady Mex. Pray, my Lord, how long has the General been absent from England?

Lord Mex. Why this last trip, my Lady, upwards of twelve years. But the General hath been an adventurer all his life, and hath succeeded so well as to have acquired an immense fortune, with only one daughter to inherit it.

Lady Mex. The General lost his Lady in India, my Lord, did he not?

Lord Mex. He did, my Lady. He was originally a cadet of my family; and I have an idea (but how I cannot ascertain) it was owing to the recommendation of some relation of mine, that he was appointed first there; in consequence of which he now very gratefully, and properly, acknowledges me as his friend and benefactor.

Lady

Lady Mex. Upon my word, my Lord, such an acknowledgment does the General infinite honor, and discovers a mind that can only be produced by a scyon from that noble stock in which he had the peculiar felicity, by birth, to be engrafted.

Lord Mex. Whatever good fortune the General may assume to himself from the honor of his own ancestors, my Lady, I am sure must be doubly accumulated in his having, from my happy union with your Ladyship, the felicity of being in some measure connected with Lady Mexington.

Lady Mex. Ah, my Lord, if the General, in the slightest degree, possesses a share of that exquisite politeness which accompanies every word and action of your Lordship, his arrival will add one to the many felicities I have constantly experienced, ever since I had the honor of sharing your Lordship's heart and title.

Lord Mex. Lady Mexington, my title you adorn, and in my heart you stand unrivalled; but now, if your Ladyship has finished breakfast, I would suggest a few ideas which strike me on this arrival of the General's; which I would have your Ladyship revolve with that superiority of understanding your Ladyship so eminently possesses.

Lady Mex. Spare me, my Lord, only give me your opinion, and I will on the instant adopt it.

Lord Mex. Pardon me, dearest of women, if I may presume, in the familiarity of my tenderness, to call you by so vulgar an appellation, it shall never be said that Lord Mexington had ever a thought, or slightest wish to put such thought into execution, without the propriety of it was first confirmed by the corresponding approbation of your Ladyship.

Lady Mex. I could for ever listen to your Lordship; but it grows late, and as I have several calls to make before dinner, to which we have company, (among others our Nephew Conyers and his friend
Mr.

Mr. Lascelles) I have but a few minutes to spare ; so beg your Lordship to unfold your purpose, and believe me all attention.

Lord Mex. Why then, my Lady, to cut the matter short, I told you the General was returned with an immense fortune, and had only one daughter : of this daughter (whom I believe neither your Ladyship or myself ever saw) Fame speaks exceedingly well, and that without seeing scarce any thing of the world, she has been educated in a most elegant and instructive manner, under the auspices of a Mr. Mortimer ; Fame says, moreover, that she is exquisitely handsome, and endowed with every intellectual and female accomplishment ; I was thinking, therefore, with your Ladyship's acquiescence, to propose a union between Miss Danvers and our nephew Conyers.

Lady Mex. My dear Lord, I adore you for starting so agreeable an idea ; I have not a doubt, if the General has the least regard for the noble stock from which he is descended, that he must truly rejoice at an event which must yield so much celebrity to himself, and so eminently advance the splendor and dignity of his daughter.

Lord Mex. Certainly he will, my Lady. Conyers must, undoubtedly, be one of the best matches in England ; for your Ladyship remembers that, some years since, when Dr. Fetherfew, at Spa, from the extreme delicacy of your Ladyship's constitution, pronounced the little probability there was of my having any inheritance of your Ladyship's virtues and accomplishments, I opened the patent of my peerage, and, with your Ladyship's consent, and indeed, by your express directions, entailed our family honors and fortune on my Nephew.

Lady Mex. Very true, my Lord, and as the same unhappy circumstances still continue, and are not likely to be obviated, I cannot see where our lineal honors

honors can be carried down to posterity with greater credit and propriety, than through the means of Miss Danvers and Mr. Conyers.

Lord Mex. I am truly happy at your Ladyship's approval of my plan; but yet there is one thing may possibly prove an obstacle to its accomplishment.

Lady Mex. What is that, my Lord?

Lord Mex. Why, you must know, my Lady, this General Danvers, who, between ourselves, is not a modern man of fashion, but rather one of the last age, met with a protégé in India, the son of a Captain Neville, the professed friend of the General's, (and nephew to the Mr. Mortimer I had before the honour of mentioning to your Ladyship) who has been supported ever since by General Danvers, with the warmest affection, as well from the merit which the young man evidently possesses, as from the true regard the General ever bore his father.

Lady Mex. Well, my Lord, but what hath this to do with the match we were talking about?

Lord Mex. Why, as thus: Who knows, my Lady, but the General, from his refined notions of generosity, from the warmth of his attachment to young Neville, and from that unaccountable punctilio of honor (which, when it insured protection, almost amounted to adoption) may intend him as a match for his daughter, which I think the more likely to happen, as the General is the most intimate friend of Mr. Mortimer, at whose house himself and Captain Neville now are.

Lady Mex. Why really this may well happen, my Lord. But how is it to be prevented? Such a circumstance would ruin our whole plan.

Lady Mex. To hinder which, my Lady, let us (as young Neville must inherit a large estate from his uncle) endeavour to promote a marriage between him and your Ladyship's niece, and elev  , Fanny Thornton; who, although she has the honor of being

so nearly connected with your Ladyship, does not abound in the gifts of Fortune, and may, in this degenerate age (where the dignity of birth and the pureness of blood are so little regarded) be left to "wither on the virgin thorn, and live and die in "single blessedness."

Lady Mex. My dear Lord, you are a perfect Machiavel; how I adore you for this kind thought of poor Fanny, who, notwithstanding your powerful countenance and protection, still remains unsolicited, and may "like the flower that's born to blush "unseen, waste all her sweetness on the desert air."

Lord Mex. Well, my Lady, I will no longer intrude on your Ladyship's time: I shall take the first opportunity of seeing the General; in the mean time, do you, Lady Mexington, acquaint your niece with our intentions; and I will lay my commands on Conyers to pay his addresses to Miss Danvers immediately. I have the honor to wish your Ladyship a good morning.

Lady Mex. Adieu my dear, dear Lord.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE.—*General Danver's House.*

Enter Mrs. Harrison and Mr. Spruce.

Mrs. Har. Well, Mr. Spruce, we shall now soon have the General's house fit to receive the whole family. Dear me, Mr. Spruce, what strange things you gentlemen who come from beyond seas tell us poor country people, who never were in foreign parts; but indeed I should not say so of myself, as I have been a considerable traveller in my life.

Spruce. What, you have been abroad, then, Mrs. Harrison, have you?

Mrs.

Mrs. Har. To be sure I have, Sir, many a good time and often, but was always rejoiced when I got within hearing of Bow Bells again.

Spruce. And pray, Madam, what part of the world have you been kind enough to honor with your appearance?

Mrs. Har. Why I'll tell you, Mr. Spruce, I'll tell you, Sir; though it is so long ago that I can scarce recollect, for I have not travelled of late years.

Spruce. Pray then, Madam, favour me with your adventures in your youth.

Mrs. Har. In my youth, Mr. Spruce, I am by no means an old woman now. Why I was born two years after the hard frost, and every body knows when that was.

Spruce. (aside) Some fifty years back, I believe.

Mrs. Har. What's that you say, Mr. Spruce?

Spruce. Why I say, Madam, that was near thirty years since.

Mrs. Har. Why truly I believe you are right, Sir, it was there or thereabouts, and considering wear and tear, the ups and downs, the roughs and smooths of life, Mr. Spruce, I don't think I look much amiss.

Spruce. Amiss, Mrs. Harrison, why you are a perfect cherub, a Miss in her teens, as I may say; why the black ox has not made the least impression upon you, nor the crow's foot left her circle under either of your charming eyes. But your travels, my dear Madam, your travels, I long to be informed of them.

Mrs. Har. Dear Mr. Spruce your conversation is so very engaging and interesting, that you have almost made me forget my travels, but now I will tell you. About twenty years ago I lived servant with Mrs. Deputy Slice (a great Cheses-monger's Lady in Portsoken Ward) they had four children, three boys and a girl, as fine babes, Mr. Spruce, as ever trod in neat's leather; the small pox raging
D violently

violently in the ward, my master, the Deputy, hired a house at Putney, on purpose to inoculate the children in; upon which, Sir, I and my mistress crossed the river Thames by going over London Bridge, went to the house which the Deputy had hired, and staid there with the dear lambs during the whole month of their confinement. And this, Mr. Spruce, was the first of my travels.

Spruce. A most hazardous adventure indeed, Mrs. Harrison.

Mrs. Har. Well, Sir, about two years after that, I nursed my poor mother, in her last illness, at Battersea, and then I was forced to cross the water again, Mr. Spruce.

Spruce. Indeed, Mrs. Harrison! what prodigious resolution you must have had.

Mrs. Har. Aye, and so people should have that travel, Mr. Spruce. But now I will tell you, Sir, my third and last adventure, which was more terrible and dangerous than both the former put together: You must know I have a sister (it was about twelve years ago Mr. Spruce) who is married and settled at Barnet, her name is Hawkins, her husband keeps a public house there, the Golden Lamb, where I assure you, Mr. Spruce, if you should ever travel, there is good entertainment for man and horse: well, Sir, in due time my sister, Mrs. Hawkins, wrote me word she was about falling to pieces (you understand me, Mr. Spruce) and begged, for the love of God, I would come immediately over, and comfort her on the occasion: accordingly, Sir, as our family is apt to be in a hurry on these occasions, I knew no time was to be lost, so directly took a place in the Barnet Fly, and was with her in a crack, as I may say. And egad, Mr. Spruce, I just nick'd it; for, would you believe it, within a quarter of an hour after my arrival, my poor sister fell in labour, and was brought
to

to bed of two as fine chubby-fac'd, cherry-cheek'd boys as ever you set your eyes upon.

Spruce. That was nicking the time indeed, Madam.

Mrs. Har. Exactly so. Lord bless me, Mr. Spruce, I never shall forget how proud Mr. Hawkins was, nay, so was my sister, for that matter, when I carried the dear children to her; poor soul! she was a long time sick and weak, and I was obliged to keep house for her full six weeks before she could take the management of her own family; she had had a cruel time of it Mr. Spruce, before I saw her; it made me shudder, Sir, and I almost determined never to put myself in a situation to suffer as she did.

Spruce. That would have been very cruel of you if you had, Mrs. Harrison.

Mrs. Har. Well, well, do not you be uneasy, Mr. Spruce, I did not, I tell you, make any rash resolutions (although I am still unmarried). But to finish my story; after my sister's up-rising, and the christening was over, I made the best of my way home again, (but not being able to get an inside place) stuck myself on the roof of the Barnet coach; all went on very well until after we were through the turnpike at Whetstone, and got a considerable way on Finchley Common, when we were alarmed by the appearance of a highwayman; the guard popp'd his blunderbuss at him, I fell off with the fright, and having a new pewter porter tankard (which my brother Hawkins had made me a present of) tied up in a coloured handkerchief to prevent its being damaged by the rain, unluckily fell plump upon the handle of it with my left side, which broke one of my ribs, and bruised me to such a degree that I was obliged to be carried to the Horns at Highgate, where I laid three weeks before I could arrive at my own house; and from that time, Mr. Spruce, I have never travelled again.

Spruce. No wonder, Madam, after so many hair-breadth escapes. Dear Mrs. Harrison, let this [*kisses her*] make a small return for the very entertaining communication you have favoured me with; but I really thought, when you first mentioned having been abroad, that you had crossed the herring-pond.

Mrs. Har. Herring-pond! what is that, Sir?

Spruce. The sea, my dear. We never call it travelling, or going abroad, if we do not go beyond sea. Should not you like a trip upon the salt water Madam?

Mrs. Har. Oh, bless me, do not name it; I would not set my foot on it for the whole world; no, not for half your year's wages, Mr. Spruce. But come, Sir, let me have a little more of your adventures and travels.

Spruce. I would willingly oblige you, my dear Mrs. Harrison, but the General is just come in, I hear his bell, and must attend him. I'll invite you and a few more of my acquaintance some other time, to a tête a tête party, and you shall then have every information you can desire. Permit me now [*kisses her*] to wish you a good morning.

Mrs. Har. Good morning to you, dear Mr. Spruce. But hold, pray first inform me, What is that same tête a tête you mention?

Spruce. Why a tête a tête, my dear, is a kind of a———sort of a———in short, it is rather difficult to be expressed; but it means six or seven young people getting together in a corner, and telling stories to one another.

Mrs. Har. Why that must be charming. Don't forget, Mr. Spruce.

Spruce. Certainly not. Once more, adieu.

Mrs. Har. Good bye, Mr. Spruce. But stay, stop a moment, how many shirts did you say you used to wear in a day, when you was in that outlandish country, the Indies?

Spruce.

Spruce. Constantly four.

Mrs. Har. And what did they used to be sprinkled with, did you tell me?

Spruce. Otta of Roses, my love.

Mrs. Har. And pray did the whole family do the same?

Spruce. Every one of them, from the General and myself, to the stable boys, from the Dabash to the Coolies.

Mrs. Har. Lord, Mr. Spruce, what hard names you talk about. What may those mean, the Dabash and the Coo——what?

Spruce. The Cooley, my dear. Why the Dubash is the General's principal head Gentleman in India, another me, for instance, only with this difference, he is a black, and I am, I rather flatter myself, of a tolerable complexion.

Mrs. Har. For that matter, Mr. Spruce, you need not flatter yourself in the least, for you are, really, a most comfortable looking young man. But what is a Cooley, I pray?

Spruce. Dear Madam, you are a woman of such infinite discernment, and your enquiries are all so perfectly judicious, that it is quite a happiness to communicate information, however trifling the subject: Coolies, my dear, are mere slaves, beasts of burthen, no use in the world but to run of errands, carry the Palanquin, and perform any other servile offices we gentlemen choose to employ them in.

Mrs. Har. Good now! what wonderful things you tell me, Mr. Spruce. And then only to consider, four shirts a day a piece for the whole family, all sprinkled with Otta of Roses. Lord have mercy upon me, how I do pity the poor laundry maid.

[Exit

Spruce. Putney, Battersea and Barnett! fine travels indeed! Zounds, I thought she had at least crossed the Line, doubled the Cape, or eat a slice of live ox
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in the empire of Abyssinia. (*Bell rings*) My dear General, do not be in such a consumed hurry, (how unhappy is the man who is destitute of patience). It is absolutely impossible for any gentleman's gentleman to be more solicitous in giving his attendance at the first summons than I am. But silence that dreadful bell! for, as the Blackamoor General in the play says (whom I acted with such great applause in India) "It"——zounds! what did he say? oh! —— "It frights the isle from her propriety."

[*Exit.*]

SCENE.—*Mr. Mortimer's.*

Enter Mr. Mortimer, speaking to a Servant.

Mr. Mort. When General Danvers arrives, shew him up; and the instant your Lady returns, present my compliments, and I request the favor of her company in the library.

Enter Servant.

Servant. The General is here, Sir.

Enter General Danvers.

Gen. Dan. My dear friend, once more I rejoice to see you. Your friendly hospitality will be doubly grateful to me after the ostentatious parade of reception I have just met with at Lord Mexington's, where I am requested again to be in the afternoon. But where is Mrs. Mortimer? I long to be introduced to the amiable woman who hath made my friend happy.

Mr. Mort. Your friendly impatience, my dear General, does me the highest honor. Mrs. Mortimer is not yet returned from an excursion she this morning made, for which I believe I guess the reason, but, as she keeps it a profound secret, I shall not presume on my discovery until she returns.

George

George is with her, and I expect them back every moment.

Enter a Servant, who whispers Mr. Mortimer.

Mr. Mort. Excuse me, General; I will attend you directly.

[Exit Mr. Mortimer.]

Gen. Dan. Well, thank heaven, I find at my return, the friend of my youth well and happy. May I but find my beloved girl so, and every moment of my future life shall be spent in adding to her felicity. My adopted Neville, too, shall ever find in me the father he has been deprived of.

Enter Mr. Mortimer leading in Miss Danvers, followed by Mrs. Mortimer and Capt. Neville.

Mr. Mort. Before I introduce Mrs. Mortimer to you, General Danvers, this young Lady, your sweet Matilda, (the true reason why my wife was not personally ready, in her own house, for your reception) claims your tenderest affection.

Gen. Dan. My Matilda, my darling girl, come to my arms, and bless your happy father.

Miss Dan. My dearest, best of fathers, do I once more behold you! am I once more folded to your bosom! Bless, bless your happy daughter.

Gen. Dan. I do, my beloved child: may heaven shower down its choicest blessings on you. Dearest Madam, to you I am indebted for this anticipated happiness; your amiable goodness knew the anxious expectations of a father, and before I could even enquire about my daughter, brought her to my longing arms.

Mrs. Mort. Mr. Mortimer ever spoke so highly of General Danvers, and so often mentioned his universal philanthropy and goodness, that I was particularly desirous to obtain the most cordial reception from him, which I thought I could by no means so absolutely ensure, as by first introducing to him his beloved Matilda.

Gen.

Gen. Dan. The wife of Mr. Mortimer would, on his account, ever claim a share in the heart of Danvers; but, under such obligations as I am, you, Madam, must ever have much more than a common interest there. But I forget; come, my dear George, let me introduce you to my Matilda, whom you can scarce remember. This is the daughter you have often heard me so anxiously mention, whom I left many years since, a smiling little girl, under the protection of your Uncle, and he has now returned her to me (if the partiality of a father may be allowed to say so) almost an angel. George, I am the happiest of human beings, and you shall find I am so, for I hold it the best return I can make Providence for all its blessings, that my felicity shall extend to those around me.

Capt. Nev. In which felicity, my dearest Sir, no one takes a greater share than myself. I had this morning the happiness of being introduced to Miss Danvers; her condescending goodness permits me to renew the acquaintance we formerly had in our infant years; which, though I doubt not has long since been forgotten by the charming Matilda, hath never been obliterated from the breast of Neville.

Gen. Dan. Well said, my young soldier. You see, Madam, your Nephew has not studied the art of war alone in India. My child, in this young man behold one, dear to your father as a son; and one whom, I am sure, should occasion make it requisite, would be the protector of my Matilda.

Capt. Nev. Against the world I would, so heaven regard me.

Mr. Mort. Come, my good friends, let us descend a little. Thank heaven, my ward is now under the protection of the best of fathers, and long may she continue so, but be assured, my old friend, I love this dear girl so much, that I shall never think her less my own than before your arrival.

Miss

Miss Dan. Dearest Sir, my obligations to you are unspeakable.

Mr. Mort. Then pray, my love, say not a word about them. But dinner is served up; General, will you escort Mrs. Mortimer, whilst I do as I would be done by—make my exit by myself, and leave you young ones to take care of each other.

[*Exit Mr. Mortimer.*]

Capt. Nev. Will Miss Danvers make me so happy?

Miss Dan. My dear George, do not be so formal, consider, my father's Neville is not quite a new acquaintance of Matilda Danvers.

[*Gives her hand, which he kisses, and leads her out.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

4 AP 54

ACT

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE.—*The Park.*

Enter Mr. Conyers, meeting Mr. Lascelles.

Mr. Las. My dear Conyers, I hope I have not quite subdued your patience?

Mr. Con. More than usually punctual, Lascelles: I wanted much to speak to you yesterday, at Lord Mexington's, but what with the pompous insignificance of my Lord, and the absurd parade of my Lady, it was impossible to obtain a single moment to ourselves. By the way, Lascelles, just inform me how you like this same Uncle and Aunt of mine, the most puissant Earl and Countess of Mexington, are they not originals?

Mr. Las. Why truly, Conyers, I think so. As to my Lord, he seems to be a complete composition of pomp, pride, and pedigree, blended with a small tincture of politeness; and for my Lady, she is happily endued with the same amiable perfections, without the least tincture of politeness at all; she absolutely seems to hold the world in contempt, and treats her friends with an arrogance of civility worse than the most downright rudeness. I was really shocked, yesterday, at the usage poor Miss Thornton received during the time of dinner.

Mr. Con. Dear Lascelles, your sentiments are mine to a tittle. As to Miss Thornton, she is (although a niece of her Ladyship's) without a single friend in the world, entirely dependant upon her bounty; reasons fully sufficient for being treated with extreme neglect,

neglect, and the most perfect indifference: but that sweet girl shall not long be subject to the capricious humour of Lady Mexington.

Mr. Las. Her Ladyship, I think does not confine the hauteur of her behaviour to Miss Thornton alone; have I not seen her attempt being extremely imperious to you?

Mr. Con. Oh yes. She once had it in contemplation, I believe, to mistake me for poor Fanny, talked perfectly en cavalier, and began to assert the prerogative of her Aunt-ship, and Countess-ship in much too dissonant a tone for the texture of my nerves to support; but it would not do, Lascelles; I begged her Ladyship to lower her key; told her I revolted from every principle of coercion, declared myself perfectly independent, and desired, when next she was pleased to be in a passion, she would vent her spleen on her Lord, her Femme de Chambre, or any other personage that would regard it more than her very respectful, and most obedient Nephew, Edward Convers.

Mr. Las. Zounds, Conyers! why this must have irritated her with a vengeance.

Mr. Con. Why, at first, I thought it would, but it took, it seems, a contrary effect; for when her Ladyship found that I was not to be talked into obedience, or frightened by arrogance, that I would not brook ill-usage, and scorned adulation, (even though my fortune depended on my Uncle and herself) she lowered her top-sails; in consequence I struck my flag of defiance; she threw in some small shot of love, kindness, sincere regard, and having my interest at heart, on which I poured in a whole broadside of thanks, compliments, and acknowledgments, and we have, ever since, been the best friends imaginable.

Mr. Las. Ha! ha! ha! But you must bear with their absurdities, Conyers, and indeed ought to do so, for to you they are magnificently bountiful. Your

present establishment, whether it results from vanity or generosity, is fully adequate to the splendid fortune you will inherit at their decease.

Mr. Con. There, indeed, Lascelles, I am under inconceivable obligations; and I wish from my soul that poor Fanny, who is one of the most amiable girls living, had as large a share in their bounty as their ungracious Nephew.

Mr. Las. And I really am surprised she has not, for Miss Thornton seems to be every way accomplished, and appears to study each look of Lord and Lady Mexington with the greatest deference, whilst you treat them with the most perfect non-chalance, contradicting my Lord in the midst of his family narrations, and even sometimes seem to doubt that Lady Mexington is the best bred woman in Europe, although she has just condescended to tell you so herself.

Mr. Con. Ha, ha, ha! Why, thou egregious Lascelles, it is that very non-chalance, as you call it, which makes us accord so comfortably. My Lord liberally provides for me, and says he means to make me his heir; but neither present favors, nor future expectations, shall make me stoop to any meanness. Whilst my Lord treats me as a gentleman, he insures my utmost gratitude; but the moment he claps on his coronet, and talks of his title and pedigree, I am off. In short, Lascelles, I pay Lord and Lady Mexington as much respect as I fairly and honestly can; at their follies I ever did, and always shall laugh, let them take it how they will.

Mr. Las. Well, take care, my friend, you do not carry the joke too far. At present, I believe, you stand very highly in their good graces. But we have wandered from the subject, this was not the matter you wanted to inform me of.

Mr.

Mr. Con. True; but your last observation will naturally lead to it.

Mr. Las. As how.

Mr. Con. Why the standing so very highly in their good opinion, as you suppose, is an honor, I assure you, I do not so very much covet, especially as I am likely to pay such a confounded price for it.

Mr. Las. I really do not comprehend you.

Mr. Con. Why you must know then, Lascelles, to my card of invitation, yesterday, was added the following postscript: "Lord and Lady Mexington desire Mr. Conyers to attend them in St. James's Square, at least an hour before dinner will be served; as they want to communicate a circumstance to their Nephew, in which his interest is particularly concerned, and their own future expectations very much involved."

Mr. Las. An admirable appenage to a dinner card, truly.

Mr. Con. I was punctual to the minute; and being ushered into the library, found my most noble Uncle and Aunt lolling, in magnificent indolence, on separate sophas. I had no sooner paid the customary compliments, but my Lord, raising himself up erect as a rattle-snake on the point of making its spring, and craning out his thin, long neck to its utmost extension, cried "Take your seat, Nephew Conyers, and your Aunt and myself will impart our commands to you immediately."

Mr. Las. A most solemn preparation; something very important must surely ensue.

Mr. Con. Very important, I assure you, nothing less, Lascelles, than to lay their strict injunctions on me, as I valued my own welfare and their regard, instantly to pay my addresses to the daughter of General Danyers, a young lady I never saw in my life, or ever heard of till that instant.

Mr.

Mr. Las. The devil they did.

Mr. Con. Yes; and the manner this agreeable information was communicated, was likewise infinitely pleasant. "Nephew," quoth my Lord, (swelling out his chest as is usual with him whenever he feels the impulse of his own sentiments) "you very well know the stock from whence you are sprang; you know, likewise, we have not a single plebeian particle about us: yes, Nephew, I take upon me to say, you have the purest, and most uncontaminated blood in your veins of any family in the three kingdoms."

Mr. Las. How, in the name of wonder, could you stand this parade and nonsense?

Mr. Con. Oh! I was determined to be perfectly tranquil, let them say what they would; so I bowed to my Uncle, told him I was perfectly sensible of the pureness of my blood, for which I thanked heaven, my father and himself.

Mr. Las. Ha! ha! ha! but go on.

Mr. Con. His Lordship looked pleased, and resuming his consequence went on: "I must also say, Nephew, that the veins of your aunt are not less dignified."

Mr. Las. What could you reply to that?

Mr. Con. Certainly, my Lord, cried I, her Ladyship's fine blood glows through her fair complexion, like the violet amidst the lillies of the valley. My Lord simpered; my Lady, first rubbing gently, then looking at the back of her hand, smiled, patted my shoulder, called me a mad-cap, and I could see, Lascelles, I had tickled her to the very soul.

Mr. Las. Really Conyers I honor your politeness extremely. What followed?

Mr. Con. "Well, Nephew," then said my Lord, "as you seem to be satisfied that this blood of ours hath flown uncorruptably through so many generations, Lady Mexington and myself (that it may be

"be still unsullied) have determined you should
 "marry. The Lady we propose is heiress to a large
 "fortune; report says she is handsome and accom-
 "plished; be the latter as it may a connexion with
 "my Lady will soon make her such; look upon
 "Miss Danvers, therefore, as your bride elect, I
 "shall this day open the matter to the General, and
 "direct such settlements as I think proper; your aunt
 "in the mean time will impart to Miss Danvers our
 "designs in her favour; pursue, therefore, this af-
 "fair with alacrity, and deserve by your implicit
 "obedience, the immense favors Lady Mexington
 "and myself are desirous of bestowing." Thus
 saying, they both stalked out of the room, leaving
 me overwhelmed with wonder and astonishment.

Mr. Las. Well you might, Conyers; but was you
 not, at the same time, overwhelmed with pleasure
 and satisfaction?

Mr. Con. By no means. Is it very likely, think
 you, that I should rejoice at measures, or feel my-
 self happy at a proposition which, if carried into
 execution, would make me completely miserable?

Mr. Las. I cannot comprehend you.

Mr. Con. Know then, Lascelles, that it is not in
 my power to obey the commands of Lord Mexing-
 ton. My heart has long ceased to be its master's,
 and has, ever since I was conscious of having one,
 claimed the tenderest union with that of the dear,
 neglected, ill-treated Fanny Thornton. I love that
 charming girl, Lascelles, infinitely better than life;
 and all the wealth and magnificence in my Lord's
 power to bestow I should esteem wretchedness in
 the extreme unless she partook it with me.

Mr. Las. Does Miss Thornton know of your
 attachment?

Mr. Con. She does; and blesses me by confessing
 a mutual one.

Mr.

Mr. Las. You will never prevail on Lord and Lady Mexington to consent to your union.

Mr. Con. Never, Lascelles; that I was too well assured of before his Lordship declared his sentiments to me. But nothing shall ever make me forego my affection for the loveliest of her sex.

Mr. Las. But what hopes, my dear Conyers, have you, for the accomplishment of your wishes? Lord and Lady Mexington's every view in life is centered in this present arrangement; and I am satisfied, could you avoid this engagement, they would never suffer you to marry Miss Thornton.

Mr. Con. You remember, on my Lord's adopting me, I inherited nothing from my father but a trifling estate, which I still possess, and must now consider as my only fortune. This I have mentioned to my Fanny, and repeatedly urged her to fly with me to Scotland, and, by sharing it with me, make me the happiest of mankind.

Mr. Las. And what prevents this plan from being carried into execution?

Mr. Con. Miss Thornton's peremptory refusal.

Mr. Las. Why I thought your sentiments were fully known to each other.

Mr. Con. I am sure they are. Fanny reposes the most implicit confidence in me; her every wish, her most extended views of happiness she repeatedly assures me would be more than gratified by sharing my scantiness of fortune; and most deeply she regrets she cannot consistently with her own ideas of rectitude, accept an offer which she is sure would be productive of the most permanent felicity.

Mr. Las. What reason does Miss Thornton assign for this refusal?

Mr. Con. Her gratitude to the Mexingtons for allowing her an unfeeling protection, which she rates as the most consummate benevolence, and the fear
of

of involving in distress the man she loves and would die to advantage.

Mr. Las. Matchless girl. But what can be done?

Mr. Con. Something shall immediately. I can no longer wear this mask of duplicity, or bear to see her continue subject to the caprice of Lady Mexington.

Mr. Las. I wish from my heart and soul, Conyers, you could induce her to go off with you, as I really think no other way so likely to bring this business to a happy conclusion. In short, my dear friend, you must prevail on Miss Thornton (for both your sakes) to be mere mortal woman and hazard an elopement.

Mr. Con. Indeed, Lascelles, you are right; and as it is probable Fanny, in her turn, may soon receive the gentle commands of Lady Mexington, to give her hand to a husband of her or my Lord's choosing, I will instantly attend my charming girl, and with all the energy of love insist (if that should be the case) she no longer adheres to punctilio, which can only be productive of wretchedness, and deprive me of the unspeakable blessing of devoting my whole life to the protection of her, for whom alone I wish to exist.

[Exit Con.]

SCENE.—A Room.

General Danvers and Mr. Mortimer sitting at a Table; Wine, Glasses, &c.

Gen. Dan. Well, my dear Mortimer, I have now let you into the whole of my scheme for adding the last cement to our long continued friendship; and I am heartily glad to find it meets with your entire approbation.

Mr. Mort. You could not doubt that, General, when it so evidently tends to the advantage of my
Nephew,

Nephew, who, in the possession of Miss Danvers, will obtain a treasure few could either aspire to or deserve.

Gen. Dan. When I first took charge of your Nephew, my friend, this was what I had particularly in view. Having an only daughter, heiress to a fortune more than sufficient to render herself, and any proper connexion she should form, happy, I only sought in the alliance for worth, integrity, and goodness. All these I found rising to maturity in Neville, the son of the friend of my youth, and nephew of my worthy Mortimer. At the early period of seventeen, he had joined the most undaunted courage to the most extensive humanity; had gained the love of his brother soldiers, and was the admiration of his superior officers: from that moment I considered him as my son, the future husband of my Matilda; and shall now, adorned as he is with every grace and accomplishment, recommend him to my daughter's love, with all the energy a father can affectionately urge.

Mr. Mort. I hear you with admiration, General, and am truly happy in having a nephew whom you think worthy so enviable a blessing.

Gen. Dan. And which I think your nephew will readily obtain. Recollect, my old friend, they were in very early life, much attached to each other, and constant playfellows together. With rapture Neville used to dwell on the praises which your letters to me in India were filled with, on the accomplishments and improvements of my Matilda.

Mr. Mort. Which praises, my dear friend, I am sure you find more than fully justified.

Gen. Dan. Since my return I have made many observations on these young people, and have, I think, discovered an increase of attachment, which soon, I have no doubt, will ripen into mutual affection.

Mr.

Mr. Mort. You are not the only one, General, who have regarded them with attention; Mrs. Mortimer told me, this morning, she thought them formed for each other; and hinted that she really believed Miss Danvers had a more than common regard for Neville.

Gen. Dan. I am happy to hear it. His diffidence will, I dare say, long keep him silent. The instant we are satisfied with their reciprocal affection we will not procrastinate their happiness, but unite them with every blessing in our power to bestow. Here they come, in earnest conversation; I must hasten to my appointment at Lord Mexington's, and do you, my friend, communicate to your amiable Lady the result of this conversation. [Exit.]

Enter Miss Danvers and Captain Neville.

Miss Dan. And did you indeed, my dear George, during your tedious residence abroad, ever bestow a thought upon the little playfellow you had left in England; one whom you honored with so much of your attention before you quitted it? I well remember the juvenile attachment we formed in our younger years; you was then my constant champion and protector on all occasions, and never failed to resent any little insult which the partakers of our childish sports offered to your Matilda.

Capt. Nev. Dearest Madam, you honor me by the retrospection. Boy as I was when I quitted England, for years I never ceased regretting the charming companion I had left; every hour brought to my recollection some bewitching trait of the dear Matilda; the amiableness of your mind, and the sweetness of your disposition were ever before me. Those days I then considered, as I do now, the happiest of my life; and I continually thought of my Matilda (as I then used to call you) until the hours of childhood were past, and my dawning reason told me 'twas presumption.

Miss Dan. Really, Neville, I believe we were actuated by a similarity of sentiment, for I can truly say, ever since your absence, the infant friend of Matilda has been present to her remembrance; and I frankly own, that the esteem which I so early imbibed for you has been constantly preserved by the continued commendations of my father.

Capt. Nev. The obligations I am under to General Danvers are inexpressible, and, believe me, I think it not one of the least that he deigned to speak favourably of me to his daughter; a daughter whom during a long series of youthful days, I presumed to love with the most ardent affection, and whom, now, I look up to with the most perfect admiration.

Miss Dan. And why, my dear George, should the real affection you said you once had for Matilda Danvers give place to the coolness of respect and admiration? Believe me, my sentiments are unchanged, and I still, warmly as ever, regard my former playfellow and companion.

Capt. Nev. The generous frankness of this confession, Madam, yields the purest transports to the bosom of Neville. Be assured that, in all circumstances of life, I shall ever bear you the warmest and most zealous attachment. When absent, and pursuing my profession, the idea of the charming Matilda will ever attend me; it will be my constant monitor, the prompter of every worthy action; and I trust, will enable me to act in such a manner as may authorise me, at some future period, to claim the renewal of your friendship.

Miss Dan. Indeed, Neville, I have no doubt but your conduct will be such as ever to command the love and esteem of the good and virtuous. But our conversation grows much too serious; I want to know why my father is gone a second time to Lord Mexington's; he has just now had a private conference with Mr. Mortimer; Mr. Mortimer has, like-
wise

wise, been closeted with his Lady, and there appears to be a mystery going forward which I cannot resolve. Can you inform me?

Capt. Nev. Indeed, from authority, I cannot. But you must not wonder, Madam, beautiful as you are, and so greatly gifted by fortune, that the General will have numerous solicitations for the blessing of your hand. I have been informed Lord Mexington means to offer his nephew, Mr. Conyers, the heir of his title and fortune, to your father as the future husband of his beloved daughter.

Miss Dan. Gracious Heaven! you alarm me. But surely my father will never attend to a proposition of this kind, in which I am so deeply interested, without first consulting me.

Capt. Nev. Be assured, Madam, he never will; he is the best of men and fathers, and I have often heard him say, that, be the offer ever so splendid, he would never force the inclinations of his Matilda, or urge her to bestow her hand where she could not willingly yield her heart.

Miss Dan. There spoke my father. But ah, Neville, how will he think of me when he learns that his Matilda, who ought not to have a thought he is unacquainted with, hath not a heart in her power to bestow?

Capt. Nev. My God! has Matilda Danvers, then, entered into engagements to which her father is a stranger?

Miss Dan. Be patient. That I have given away my heart, and irrevocably given it, is true; but that I have not unworthily disposed of it is equally so.

Capt. Nev. Might I be worthy of my Matilda's confidence?

Miss Dan. No, Neville. You are the man improper person I could, at present, confide in; however, a time will come when I shall make you my confidant; and be assured, so high is my regard for you,

you, that I shall never be perfectly happy till you sanctify my choice by your entire approbation.

Capt. Nev. Be but that choice worthy of Miss Danvers, and not frustrate the happiness of her noble father, and I shall largely share the general joy.

Miss Dan. Trust me, Neville, if I know my father, he will approve the disposition of my heart, I will instantly seek him; and, as soon as I have obtained his consent, you shall be informed who is the real object of my regard; he is at present, I believe, entirely ignorant of my attachment; however, he has ever professed the warmest esteem for me, and as I consider you as a most affectionate friend, I shall, if necessary, claim your assistance in procuring from him that return of affection, without which I should be for ever miserable.

Capt. Nev. Little occasion will there be for my interference, as there exists not the man who would not be supremely blest in the offer of your heart, and accept, in your charming self, a treasure which the world cannot parallel.

Miss Dan. Well, Neville, I shall soon put you to the test. But I see Mrs. Mortimer approaching; I would not have her find us together. Adieu. When next we meet, ah Neville! that moment either confirms or destroys the happiness of your Matilda for ever.

[Exit Matilda,

Capt. Nev. Gracious God! what can all this mean? How am I to understand her? My senses are bewildered, and my imagination cannot form a clue to conduct me through the labyrinth in which I am involved. Is it possible that the beautiful, the accomplished Matilda Danvers should ever deign to bestow a thought on one so much beneath her as myself? No: let me check my aspiring thoughts; she must mean some happier object, and one more equal

to her in birth and fortune. And, yet, how can I construe some of her expressions? But away with these fond ideas; let me summon reason to my aid, and consider her only as the daughter of my noble friend, to whom I am devoted to give every assistance in my power towards the accomplishment of her dearest wishes.

Enter Mrs. Mortimer.

Mrs. Mort. So, my dear new acquaintance, I find you meditating, I conclude, on the charms of the young Lady whom I this moment met, and who informed me she just now left you.

Capt. Nev. Indeed, Madam, she hath left me room for "meditation, even to madness." But you must pardon my conversing on the subject; the charming Matilda has entrusted me with a secret which I cannot reveal until I have her authority to divulge it.

Mrs. Mort. Ah, my poor Neville, I find you are no great expounder of enigmas. Why with this secret, of which you are so extremely careful, I have been acquainted some time.

Capt. Nev. Indeed! And do you, my dear Madam, know the object of Matilda's tenderest affections?

Mrs. Mort. Yes—and so do you.

Capt. Nev. No, on my honor, although I pressed to know, Matilda informed me she could not yet entrust me with it. Whoever he is, he must be the happiest of mankind.

Mrs. Mort. Upon my word, Captain Neville, you speak with so much transport on the occasion, that one would think you yourself had an affection for Miss Danvers.

Capt. Nev. Affection for Miss Danvers! Good God! and who has not an affection for Miss Danvers? But, dearest Madam, urge me no more on so tender a subject. I know myself, and know, also, the daughter of my friend.

Mrs.

Mrs. Mort. Not you, indeed: you know neither of them; not, at least, as you ought, or Matilda wishes. But I see you are more and more amazed; so come with me to your Uncle, and, possibly, between us, without much breach of confidence, we may unloose this gordian knot which, at present, seems so completely to tie up your shallow understanding.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT THE FOURTH.

Enter Lady Mexington followed by Benson.

Lady Mex. Is my Lord returned, Benson?

Benson. No, my Lady.

Lady Mex. Desire Miss Thornton to attend me directly.

[Exit Benson.]

I much approve this scheme of my Lord's respecting the union between Miss Danvers and our Nephew. The General's fortune, from every enquiry, I hear is immense; and as there can be no doubt but he will settle every shilling to procure his daughter a rank and situation his warmest wishes could never aspire to, our house may again claim the elevation to the Dukedom it has so long wished to obtain.

Enter Servant.

Where's Miss Thornton?

Serv. She will attend your Ladyship immediately.

[Exit Servant.]

Lady Mex. I cannot think, however, my Lord will be able to bring about the match between young Neville and Fanny. The Mortimers will never suffer the heir of their estate to unite himself with a girl who (although so nearly allied to me) possesses not a shilling. I wish, however, she was fairly off my hands; I like her not near so much now as I did a few years since. Of late she has been too much distinguished; nay, I have even seen Conyers look at her with tenderness. An attachment there would totally derange every view of my Lord's and my own. I cannot possibly conceive Conyers means any thing serious in his attention to Fanny, if he
c did,

did, it would for ever ruin him in the favor of Lord Mexington, and I would entirely withdraw my protection from Miss Thornton for ever.

Enter Miss Thornton.

Miss Thornton, I expected your attendance an age ago.

Miss Thorn. Pardon me, Madam, but——

Lady Mex. You were better engaged, I suppose.

Miss Thorn. I see your Ladyship is displeased; permit me to withdraw.

Lady Mex. No; stay where you are if you please Miss. When I sent for you you might reasonably suppose, child, I had something to say to you.

Miss Thorn. I wait your Ladyship's commands.

Lady Mex. It is your duty so to do. Am not I and my Lord your only protectors? did we not receive you into our family the wretched orphan of a discarded sister, who had disgraced us all in marrying a country Curate, without any expectations, and whose only preferment was a paltry stipend of fifty pounds a year, and the chaplaincy of a marching regiment? And did she not thus disappoint her whole family, who had provided her a match which would have added dignity to them, and given rank and splendour to herself? and, what was worse, did she not, after starving with this happy connexion for near ten years, when she had the good fortune to get rid of it, refuse my Lord Mexington's recommendation of a second choice (by which she might have retrieved the errors of the first) and devote herself to constant widowhood, out of regard to the memory of a man with whom she had been uniformly miserable? But she was ever undutifully disrespectful to her family, and deserved the wretchedness she created.

Miss Thorn. Pardon me, Madam. I was so early deprived of the blessing of both my parents that I scarce remember either; but have often heard my mother

mother escaped from vice and deformity to ally herself to every virtue: and that, during my father's life, she was the happiest of her sex.

Lady Mex. Ridiculous. Can happiness ever reside with poverty in a cottage?

Miss Thorn. With such a man as my lamented father was said to be, it constantly would.

Lady Mex. Upon my word, Miss, these are extremely fine notions, and perfectly commendable in a young creature with no other fortune than the countenance of her friends. Why, I dare say, if Lord Mexington and myself were to lay our commands upon you to accept an offer we should direct you to approve, you, too, would fly from vice and deformity, as you might be pleased to call it, and ally yourself to every virtue, by forming a love-sick connexion with any mean wretch who would flatter your sensibility, or sympathise in that bewitching current of tears which this moment flows so readily down your grief worn cheek.

Miss Thorn. Indeed your Ladyship treats me too unkindly. Fully sensible, since the irreparable loss I have sustained, of the many and great obligations I am under to you and Lord Mexington, I am not conscious of having acted with the least want of duty to either; but your Ladyship must forgive me if I frankly declare, that persecuted as my mother was, and meeting with the same temptation, I should pursue the same steps, rather than make myself for ever miserable by entering into an alliance with a person my heart could not associate with, let the station to which he might raise me be ever so splendid and advantageous.

Lady Mex. Indeed you improve extremely, child; but if you have a mind to continue under my protection you must eradicate these vulgar ideas; they may do extremely well in plebeian life, but not for the sphere in which you now are, probably, (by the kind

kind interference of my Lord) desined to move. Vice and deformity indeed! they may exist among the canaille, or lower part of the human species, but with us, child, it is quite different; what is vice in them, with us is fashion and the common privilege of rank; and as for deformity, the pureness of our blood, the exaltedness of our stations, and the total deprivation of *mauvaise honte*, so extremely troublesome to the inferior part of the world, remedies every defect of nature, and constitutes us completely perfect.

Miss Thorn. To your Ladyship's opinion I submit with the utmost deference; yet I cannot help thinking it formed more for the glare and glitter of life than for the true enjoyment of it.

Lady Mex. Well, child, you and I have different sentiments I find. But, to cut the matter short, I shall, in a few words, communicate to you my Lord's and my own.

Miss Thorn. I am all attention to your Ladyship.

Lady Mex. You know General Danvers, who is just returned from India, has an only daughter, the sole heiress of his vast possessions. My Lord means to propose a match between her and his nephew Conyers: he has received proper directions from my Lord, and I shall, myself, introduce him to the Lady this afternoon.

Miss Thorn. I am sure, Madam, no person in the world can more sincerely rejoice at the happiness of Mr. Conyers than myself.

Lady Mex. Indeed! Upon my word, Miss Thornton, Mr. Conyers seems to be much in your good graces. But we will leave this matter to be settled between the parties; and now a word or two respecting yourself. The General brings over with him a Captain Neville, a nephew of Mr. Mortimer's, who if he should have no family of his own, will be his heir: This Neville my Lord means to introduce into
our

our family by a union with yourself, which he has no doubt of effecting, notwithstanding your want of fortune, as he means to make the General's agreeing to his second proposal a preliminary article to his own completion of the first.

Miss Thorn. Good God! do I perfectly comprehend your Ladyship?

Lady Mex. I scarce think you do, child. You ought almost to worship the goodness of Lord Mexington, who in this instance has not only considered your establishment, but also your delicacy; why you will not have even the pleasure of a little persecution; not a shadow of excuse for resistance, not so much as your own favourite plea, vice and deformity to fly from; but must e'en sit down contented with your wretched fate, and submit to be happy through the vulgar medium, and barbarous assistance of your best friends and benefactors.

Miss Thorn. With the utmost gratitude I acknowledge my Lord's intended kindness, but most earnestly implore no such proposal be ever made; perfectly contented with my present situation my only wish is to continue it.

Lady Mex. Miss Thornton, you astonish me? Can you possibly assign a reason why you should reject a proposition so evidently intended for your advantage?

Miss Thorn. There I hope your Ladyship will have the goodness to excuse me. As I never mean to take any step which you or my Lord may justly condemn, permit me to retain, in my own breast, the reasons for my rejecting Captain Neville, should he be induced to make me an offer of his hand.

Lady Mex. Have a care, Miss Thornton. You will make me suspect that, like your unhappy mother, you have yielded to the seducing attractions of some low born object, who will entail disgrace and poverty upon yourself and family.

Miss

Miss Thorn. Surely your Ladyship does me injustice by your suspicions. If ever my heart should make its election, I trust the object will be such as shall excuse me to my Lord for not accepting his kind interference. I fully admit all the merits of Captain Neville, but will never give my hand unaccompanied by my heart.

Lady Mex. I see, Miss, you are the true inheretrix of the only fortune your mother left (her romantic train of ideas); but as they never can be of any use to you, I require you instantly to discard them. Your astonishing rejection of our offered kindness raises in me suspicions, which, were they verified, would make me directly return you to the abject condition from which I so benevolently took you. But, as you do not want sense, I still hope you will change your opinion, and be directed as your superiors think proper. Retire to your chamber, child, banish the absurd notions you are at present so fond of, throw yourself entirely upon the favor of Lord Mexington and myself, and, in a few words, remember, as you are under the highest obligations, we expect the most unlimited obedience.

[*Exit Lady Mexington.*]

Miss Thorn. What a distressed situation am I in: brought up in the bosom of pomp and affluence, niece to Lady Mexington, and under the immediate protection of my Lord; who is supposed so happy as myself? whilst I, to obtain the slender countenance I am favoured with, am obliged to renounce the honored name of my father, appear but as a distant relation, and feel myself, in reality, only a precarious dependant on her Ladyship. I am coolly treated by my Lord, overlooked by the generality of their acquaintance, and too familiarly regarded by the whole family; yet let me not speak unjustly, here comes one who, if the earnest declarations of affection

affection can be relied upon, thinks more favourably of me.

Enter Mr. Conyers.

Mr. Con. My dearest Fanny why thus? What fresh occasion has my unfeeling aunt given for these tears? Speak to me my love; speak to your faithful Conyers, who is anxious to redress your sorrows or to share them.

Miss Thorn. Indeed, indeed, Edward, I have reason for these tears. I could readily brook common ill usage, but unprovoked malevolent aspersions on the character of my parents I cannot bear.

Mr. Con. Curse on the rancorous heart that could give uneasiness to the gentle bosom of my angel. But why, my Fanny, why will you not accept my ardently repeated vows, and fly with your faithful Edward? My sweetest love, only permit me to be legally your protector, and who shall dare to insult you?

Miss Thorn. Dearest Edward, I have the firmest reliance on your honor and your love; but, indeed, I cannot, must not, accept your generous offer. Impelled as I am by unkindness, and powerfully tempted by you, yet I will not, (by a compliance with what my affection strongly induces me to) degrade myself in the opinion of the man I love, who, in despite of every prudential reason, and to the utter destruction of his own future fortune, generously offers to be my husband.

Mr. Con. My charming Fanny, this refusal, though it frustrates every wish of my heart, and deprives your Edward of the power of making (as he thinks he could do) his adored Fanny happy, exalts you still higher in his opinion.

Miss Thorn. May I ever retain that opinion, and I am happy.

Mr. Con. Well, my sweet girl, we will suspend this argument till happier times (or I have greater influ-

influence); but you no longer shall be subject to this injurious treatment from Lady Mexington, whose narrow heart is chilled to every sentiment of affection, and who affords protection only to gratify pride, and shew an unmeaning compassion she never feels. I have now to tell you (with the sincerity I have ever used) that my Uncle and Lady Mexington have laid their commands upon me to pay my instant addresses to the daughter of General Danvers.

Miss Thorn. This is what I have long expected; and forbid it, heaven, that the humble Fanny should ever prevent Edward Conyers from being placed in that elevated station which his virtues will so eminently adorn. No, my Edward, make happy your noble relatives by your immediate consent to their proposal; unite yourself to the enviable Miss Danvers, and leave me to my fate, which will not be entirely wretched if I hear that you are happy.

Mr. Con. No; that can never be. Instantly will I fly to Lord Mexington, and avow my unalterable love for my noble minded, generous girl. I will tell him my every wish is centered in her, and that no power on earth shall prevent our union. If I am deprived of his consent, adieu, for ever, to all my once great conceived expectations; with heart-felt pleasure shall I give up the splendor of life, and, with the little pittance I am possessed of, throw myself at the feet of my Fanny; and in her arms, and in a cottage, possess more happiness than the world, without her, can bestow. But retire, my love. To General Danvers, who is goodness itself, will I relate the story of our love; and, in describing the amiable qualities of my Fanny, excuse myself for not obeying the commands of my Uncle.

Miss Thorn. My noble, generous Edward.

[Exit Miss Thornton, in tears.

Enter a Servant shewing in General Danvers.

Servant.

Serv. General Danvers, my Lord. I beg pardon, Sir, I thought his Lordship had been here.

Gen. Dan. No matter. As my Lord is so immediately expected, with this young gentleman's permission (if I intrude not on his privacy) I will wait here till he returns.

Mr. Con. I beg General Danvers will allow me the pleasure of reaching him a chair. My name is Conyers, Sir; I have the honor to be nephew to Lord Mexington, who, I am sure, will be extremely sorry he was from home when you favoured him with this visit.

Gen. Dan. I regard the circumstance with pleasure, as it gives me an opportunity of being acquainted with a gentleman whom I have often heard so favourably spoken of.

Mr. Con. You do me infinite honor, General; and believe me when I say, there is no person's good opinion I should so anxiously wish to obtain as your's. Pardon me, Sir, but I shall infinitely surprise you when I inform you that, had I not thus accidentally been favoured with meeting General Danvers, I was determined to have taken the liberty of introducing myself to him, to throw myself upon his generosity; and by discovering my whole mind to him on a subject which interests me more than life itself, endeavour to procure his assistance.

Gen. Dan. Mr. Conyers, I feel myself much interested in your conversation; speak your mind freely, depend on the most inviolable secrecy, and be assured of every assistance in my power. I observed on my first being introduced, a young Lady who seemed to be in tears—pardon me, but I suspect it is on her account you wish to consult me.

Mr. Con. Most truly have you guess'd, Sir. On that young Lady depends my every hope of happiness; her acceptance, or rejection, of my vows

makes

makes me either the most blest, or miserable of mankind.

Gen. Dan. From the sweetness of her countenance (of which I had just a transient glance) I should imagine she possesses a heart that would not be inexorable to the addresses of a man of your figure. But may I be so much in your confidence as to know who the young Lady is?

Mr. Con. Most certainly, Sir; in your breast I shall repose the most unlimited confidence. She is known by the name of Thornton, but that name is only an assumed one, forcibly imposed on her by the pride of Lady Mexington to conceal the niece under the appearance of a distant relation; her real one is Dormer.

Gen. Dan. Dormer did you say? Surely this young Lady cannot be the daughter of Lady Adeline Darville, the unfortunate sister of Lady Mexington, who was discarded by her family for avoiding a match with that wretch Lord Aberton, a perfect compound of vice and deformity, whom her friends would have united her to, but who, nobly disdaining the mercenary prostitution, took refuge in the arms of the worthiest of mankind, my beloved friend Henry Dormer?

Mr. Con. If that Dormer was a Clergyman and resided in Kent, she is the very same.

Gen. Dan. He was: and, in humble retirement, there enjoyed every happiness which worth and goodness, united to beauty and loveliness, could possibly bestow. Dormer and myself were friends from our earliest childhood, but had been separated by our different avocations, and did not renew our acquaintance until some years after he had been united to his Adeline. The scantiness of their fortune was their sole regret, and that only because it narrowed their power of giving their children the education they wished. I was, at that time, a soldier

dier of fortune, just ready to embark for India to take the command of a regiment which was to be some time stationary there. The little assistance I then could give was the chaplaincy of my regiment (and as Dormer had an insuperable aversion to going abroad) procuring him a leave of absence for his continuance at Beachfield.

Mr. Con. Good God! could no assistance be obtained for this unfortunate couple from Lady Adeline's Family? Were no applications made to alleviate the distress they were inevitably involved in?

Gen. Dan. Yes, application was most earnestly made, but peremptorily refused, and Dormer had too much honest pride of heart to repeat what had been with so much arrogance rejected. I determined if fortune favoured me, to dedicate a part of my success to the happier establishment of my beloved friends; but before I was enabled to make them any remittances of consequence, I learnt they were both dead, and had left an infant daughter behind them.

Mr. Con. Which daughter is the beloved of my soul, the long ill-treated and neglected Fanny Dormer.

Gen. Dan. I made repeated enquiries after the infant orphan, but all I could learn respecting her was, that, upon the death of her parents, she had quitted Beachfield, had been taken from the family to whom she was entrusted, and was under the protection of her mother's relations. This, and the very active scenes of life in which I was then engaged precluded my farther enquiries; but I was fully determined, if I returned to England, to find her out, and in every respect consider her as an adopted daughter.

Mr. Con. And truly happy will my Fanny be, I am sure, in such an adoption. General Danvers, to this angelic girl I have been long bound by the strictest ties; she regulates every movement of my heart,

heart, and the happiness of my existence depends on my being united to her. She blesses me with her approbation of my love, and declares even a mutual passion, but refuses the completion of my hopes because she is entirely regardless of her own superior beauty and accomplishments, infinitely too conscious of her dependent situation, and is assured her compliance would inevitably ruin me in the favor of Lord and Lady Mexington.

Gen. Dan. Mr. Conyers, I have heard you with pleasure; your sentiments do honor to you as a man, but why not avow them? What objection can my Lord possibly have to your union with so amiable a character as Miss Dormer? There is no disparagement in point of family, and any addition of fortune to my Lord's immense one I conclude to be the least object of his wishes.

Mr. Con. Dear Sir, you are, I doubt, unacquainted with the real disposition of Lord and Lady Mexington. Possessing a fortune which avarice itself might be contented with, and enjoying a rank in life which hath few competitors, they languish for something unpossessed. The Dukedom of Powerscourt, which was once offered to my Lord, but refused from political reasons, is now become the sole object of their wishes, and which they imagine nothing but an increase of fortune will enable them to obtain.

Gen. Dan. And by what means is my Lord now to acquire this envied distinction?

Mr. Con. By a means, General, which I am almost ashamed to mention. I yesterday received the peremptory commands of my Lord to pay my instant addresses to your amiable daughter (by the aid of whose fortune this exaltation is to be acquired) on pain of forfeiting every future claim on his Lordship's favour and fortune. Seeing Miss Dormer as I do, and unalterably fixed in my affection, judge my situation. In one circumstance, however, I was happy,

happy, not having the honor of being acquainted with Miss Danvers, I could not, by a non-compliance with his Lordship's wishes, possibly offend the delicacy of that young Lady. I was communicating these circumstances to Miss Dormer, with a full determination to appeal to you, when you providentially entered the room, and, by the kind interest you have taken in my distress, permitted me to make you the confidant of every secret purpose of my heart.

Gen. Dan. My dear Conyers, your person and accomplishments, with the openness of heart you possess, would sufficiently justify any father in recommending you to his daughter's love, and do my Matilda honor; but I have indubitable reasons to suppose that her heart (like your own) is already bestowed on an object every way worthy the possession of it.

Mr. Con. Heaven grant they live long and happily together; and you, my dear General, see their children's children; and for many, many years may Providence permit your goodness to be an example of benevolence to a world which wants it.

Gen. Dan. I am grateful for your wishes. But now a word or two on your own affairs. I am not surprised (from some hints I have received) at Lord Mexington's design in proposing this match between you and my daughter, as I have ever found his Lordship's attention to me increase in proportion to my increase of affluence. But does his Lordship mean to make a matter of traffic of my daughter? I spurn at the mercenary idea. It is not his wealth, his title, or even his expected honors that can have any influence over me: to me virtue alone is true nobility; I shall give my daughter to the son of my friend, the child of my adoption, and would do so, endowed as he is, did he not possess a shilling, and were a monarch his competitor. But I beg pardon, Mr. Conyers,

Conyers, too much involved in my own affairs, we have wandered from your's; tell me, in a word, what is your determined purpose respecting Miss Dormer?

Mr. Con. Instantly to communicate to Lord and Lady Mexington my unalterable affection, and forego every advantage pomp, splendor and affluence can bestow, if not permitted to share them with her I love.

Gen. Dan. Resolved as the man I wish to esteem my friend, no longer shall Miss Dormer be subject to the unfeeling protection of Lady Mexington, under the hospitable roof of Mrs. Mortimer she shall reside until my house is ready for her reception, and until I can prevail on Lord and Lady Mexington to consent to your union, which I have no doubt of accomplishing when they learn my daughter is irrevocably engaged. From this instant to me your amiable Fanny is another Matilda, and, thank God (if I know my daughter) she has a heart that will rejoice in having so amiable a friend and companion.

Mr. Con. How can I possibly thank General Danvers, as I ought, for the unbounded obligations I am under.

Gen. Dan. Not a word on that subject. Something has, I conclude, prevented Lord Mexington from keeping his appointment. Probably I shall find him at Mr. Mortimer's. Do you instantly conduct Miss Dormer thither; I earnestly wish for the pleasure of being introduced to her, and to assure her of my tenderest regard and protection.

[*Exit General Danvers.*]

Mr. Con. Exalted man! But let me hasten to my Fanny, and acquaint her with the blest particulars.

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE—*Mr. Lascelles' Lodgings in Bond Street.*

Lascelles reading.

Enter Mr. Conyers.

Mr. Con. Congratulate me, dear Lascelles on the fortunate change of my situation; when last we parted I was wretched to an extreme, at this moment I experience the most heartfelt satisfaction, and have reason to suppose every bar will speedily be removed that prevents my union with my enchanting Fanny.

Mr. Las. I do congratulate you, my dear Conyers, most heartily; but how has this event been brought about; have you explained yourself to your uncle, and is it with the consent of him and Lady Mexington?

Mr. Con. No, Lascelles; I am confident I shall never obtain their sanction to my wishes; my present happiness is owing to having communicated the sentiments of my heart to the most excellent of mankind.

Mr. Las. And who, Conyers, is this admirable character to whom you are so infinitely beholden?

Mr. Con. General Danvers. Induced by his persuasive goodness, to him I related the story of my unalterable love for Miss Thornton, whom henceforth you will know, Lascelles, by her real name of Dormer; the other was a fictitious one, to prevent the world's discovering

discovering the very near relationship she bore the haughty Lady Mexington; but she is, my Lascelles, the daughter of Lady Adeline Darville, that unfortunate sister of her ladyship's who was so cruelly treated by her own family, for preferring happiness in the arms of indigent merit, to misery surrounded by affluence and splendor.

Mr. Las. You amaze me, Conyers; and did you know the real name of this young lady?

Mr. Con. I have for many years; but, at her earnest request, never communicated the secret. When I first mentioned the name of Dormer to General Danvers, he was agitated beyond description; most eagerly questioned me respecting her; and I soon learnt, to my inexpressible joy and astonishment, that this lovely object of all my wishes was the daughter of the General's dearest friends, Henry and Lady Adeline Dormer.

Mr. Las. What a fortunate discovery.

Mr. Con. With tears of affection the General related the intimacy that had long subsisted between himself and the parents of my Fanny; he bitterly lamented their early deaths, before he had it in his power to extricate them from the unfortunate circumstances in which they were unhappily involved; he informed me, that hearing they had left an orphan daughter, he had taken every step, which the distance he was at would allow, to offer her his protection; but baffled in all his enquiries, he was never able to discover her.

Mr. Las. How near was the pride of Lady Mexington likely to prevent Miss Dormer receiving the blessing Providence had in store for her.

Mr. Con. I informed General Danvers of the commands I had received from Lord Mexington to address his daughter; at the same time honestly told him, I had not a heart to bestow; that my affections were wholly Miss Dormer's, who had accepted my
vows;

vows, but would not bless me with her hand, because she fondly thought her consent would for ever deprive me of my Lord's favor and protection.

Mr. Las. What reply did the General make to this communication?

Mr. Con. He commended my frankness; acknowledged he could with the utmost pleasure have received me into his family, but that as my heart was irrevocably engaged, so he had reason to believe his daughter had disposed of her's. He then avowed he should regard the future establishment of Miss Dormer, as one of the duties of his life; offered his warmest interest to promote our mutual happiness, assured me he had no doubt of reconciling Lord and Lady Mexington to our union, and desired me instantly to place her under the protection of Mrs. Mortimer.

Mr. Las. Now, Conyers, I congratulate you indeed; and have no doubt you and Miss Conyers will soon be happy in the possession of each other.

Mr. Con. After leaving the General I hastened to Lord Mexington's, to acquaint him with my determined resolution; but, not meeting him, left a letter, acknowledging the sense I had of his repeated obligations, expressing my sorrow that I could not obey his commands, confessing my attachment to Miss Dormer, imploring his Lordship's consent to our union, without which I must be miserable; at the same time firmly assuring him, no power on earth should prevent its taking place, be the consequence what it would. I then conducted my enraptured Fanny to Mr. Mortimer's, where I need not say she met with the tenderest and most affectionate reception.

Mr. Las. Poor Miss Dormer, how happy must she feel herself at being treated with a kindness she had so seldom experienced.

Mr. Con. Well, Lascelles, happy in the now situation of my beloved girl, I could not rest until I had communicated to you this unexpected felicity.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Lord Mexington's gentleman is below Sir; he has a message to deliver you from his Lordship, and a letter which he is directed to give into the hands of Mr. Conyers.

Mr. Las. Desire Mr. Benson to walk up. Now for it, Conyers, are not you anxious to learn the contents of his Lordship's letter?

Mr. Con. Not very; I already anticipate them. I expect a total rejection of my wishes, which, as my mind is resolute to its purpose, I shall pay little regard to.

Enter Benson, who bows and delivers a letter to Mr. Conyers

Mr. Las. Well, Mr. Benson, what are his Lordship's commands with me?

Benson. Sir, I am commanded by my Lord, to present his compliments to Mr. Lascelles, and inform him, that his Lordship would esteem the honor of half an hour's conference with him in St. James's Square, at his earliest leisure, a particular favor.

Mr. Las. My respectful compliments, and assure his Lordship I will do myself the honor to attend his commands in less than an hour.

Benson. I shall obey your orders, good Sir, and deliver your message to my Lord without delay. Mr. Conyers am I to have the honor to bear any answer back to that letter of his Lordship's?

Mr. Con. It requires none, Benson; good morning to you?

Benson. Gentlemen, I am the humblest of your humble servants.

{ *Exit.*
Mr.

Mr. Las. Ha—ha—ha! Why this fellow, Conyers, seems to have imbibed a little of the Mexington stiffness; but what says his Lordship?

Mr. Con. As I expected. Read. (*gives the letter.*)

Mr. Las. (*reading.*) "You would have done well, Mr. Edward Conyers, to have communicated your intentions to me before I had subjected myself to the mortification of a refusal from General Danvers, when I proposed an alliance between our families. Heaven and earth, Sir, do I live to say, the splendid offers I proposed were rejected, on account of a prior engagement of his daughter to Captain Neville. I hastened home from the infatuated General, expecting you, Sir, to have felt the degradation we had sustained, with a determined purpose to wipe off the insult, and call either him or Captain Neville to a most severe account; when, instead of finding you ready to shed every drop of the Mexington blood in your veins, in reparation of our injured honor, I meet with a paltry letter, conceived in terms too disrespectful and absurd to require an answer. Mr. Edward Conyers, henceforward your appearance at Mexington house is dispensed with by him who was your uncle, but is now to you (as to the merest stranger) *The Earl of Mexington.*"

Mr. Las. Magnificent indeed, Conyers; yet this storm will soon be allayed I hope. But I must dress to attend his Lordship. What he can want with me Heaven knows: I conclude, however, it is something relative to your business; should it prove so, as I have the honour to know Mr. Mortimer, I will call upon you there, and give you the result of our conversation. Good morning to you.

Mr. Con. Farewell, Lascelles, you will find me at Mr. Mortimer's.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE.—*Mr. Mortimer's.*

Enter General, Miss Danvers, and Captain Neville.

Gen. Dan. To complete this union, my beloved children, has long been the object of all my wishes. In you, Neville, I have been delighted to see the most ardent affection for my daughter, restrained by that diffidence that ever accompanies true merit. Your amiable frankness, my sweet Matilda, does you honor; formed for and worthy of each other, long may you enjoy every felicity. In this good girl, Neville, you possess the darling daughter of your friend; the true representative of all her mother's amiable qualities. In Neville, my child, you will find a constant protector and the most tender husband; I know his heart; he unites his father's goodness with his father's honor. Look down, blest spirit of my departed friend, from your abode of bliss, and see me with pleasure join their hands; inspire them with your virtues, and they must be happy.

Capt. Nev. My more than father I take her as the choicest gift of Heaven and you; as such I will respect, as such I will for ever love and regard her.

Miss Dan. Thus sanctioned by the approving voice of a parent, who, during his whole life, has ever studied the felicity of his daughter, I can only say, it is without the least reluctance I yield my hand to him, from whom you, my honored Sir, and my beloved Mrs. Mortimer, have long since discovered I could not preserve the possession of my heart.

[Capt. Nev. kisses her hand.]

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Mortimer, and Miss Dormer.

Gen. Dan. Welcome, my friends, most welcome. You come opportunely to wish joy to this young couple.

Mr.

Mr. Mort. Most affectionately do I wish it; and have no doubt of its continuance. George, what do you not owe to your generous benefactor? In this young lady you possess a treasure which is invaluable; make it the study of your life to deserve her.

Mrs. Mort. Joy to you my sweet confidant; may every day of your life add to the blessings you are so deserving of. As to you, my new-found relation, I need not give you joy, your looks declare it. And now, my friend, do not you think me a tolerable good expounder of riddles?

Capt. Nev. Dearest Madam, I shall never cease to remember the obligations I am under, for the very affectionate interest you have ever taken in my happiness.

Gen. Dan. Amid the general joy, my friends, let us not forget the interest we owe to the happiness of others. Pardon, my dearest Miss Dormer, this inattention. Be assured, my beloved girl, of my utmost endeavours to obtain the consent of Lord and Lady Mexington to all our wishes. If their pride should reject my solicitations, from that moment you are to consider yourself the child of my affection: in return for which, you must allow me the privilege of giving your hand to the deserving Conyers.

Miss Dor. My dearest Sir, for this most parental manifestation of your kindness, and for the tenderness of my reception here, I have not power of utterance to express my gratitude; my heart, however, truly acknowledges, and whilst it beats can never cease to feel your goodness. To you I wholly submit the future regulation of my life; a life which I have no hesitation to own, would be rendered infinitely happy if passed with Mr. Conyers.

Gen.

Gen. Dan. Be satisfied, my dear girl, every thing shall be tried to promote the happiness of you both. Here comes Conyers; I will first hear his intelligence and then attend my Lord, who must be soothed into compliance after the rejection his proud spirit thinks it has met with from me to-day.

Enter Conyers.

Well, my friend, I read disappointment in your every look; what hath my Lord said.

Mr. Con. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing him, but by letter have just been forbid appearing in his presence.

Gen. Dan. Well, no matter; Mr. Mortimer and myself will instantly attend him. Do you and Neville, therefore, in our absence, endeavour to amuse these ladies; and be assured of our every exertion in your favor.

Mr. Mort. When you, General, are the solicitor I think it is impossible to fail; with pleasure I accompany you. My dear we will be with you in the evening.

Mrs. Mort. Really, gentlemen, I shall expect your return with the utmost impatience. What a cypher must I be in the company of four such forlorn objects; who can only think of, look at, and speak to each other.

Mr. Mort. Why really, my love, I pity your distress extremely; but cannot you amuse yourself, during the short period of our absence, with that masterly production of female genius, the Mysteries of Udolpho?

Mrs. Mort. Excuse me, my dear; my mind is fixed on real and permanent happiness; perfectly out of tune for imaginary woes and ideal grievances. But be speedy in your return; not but I honestly confess, that I am charmed, beyond measure, at the uninterrupted felicity these favorites of us all are likely soon to enjoy. So come along, children;
and

and I promise, during the absence of the General and my husband, to be either delighted or miserable, just as you find yourselves most inclined.

Gen. Dan. Dear Madam, we leave you in wretched company certainly; but, as the important business of my life will be over at my return, I mean to dedicate the remainder of it totally to gallantry. And, with the approbation of my friend, hereafter to make you the sole object of it. So, until you see me at your feet, my adorable Mrs. Mortimer, once more adieu.

[*Exit General and Mr. Mortimer one way, Neville, Conyers, and the Ladies another.*]

SCENE.—*The Library at Lord Mexington's.*

Lord and Lady Mexington conversing.

Lady Mex. And did the General, my Lord, actually refuse our offered alliance?

Lord Mex. He did, Madam, absolutely reject it; though in some measure qualified, by informing me his daughter had for some years been engaged to the man of his choice.

Lady Mex. Good Heaven! the General must be deranged. The distinguished offers of your Lordship should have made him instantly renounce the plebeian connexion; for my part I discard his acquaintance. But, my Lord, I must inform you of another disappointment equally galling; the serpent I have so long fostered in my bosom (now, forsooth, established as my niece, and under her real name of Dormer) is through the officious interference of this detested General, gone from our protection; and, as the daughter of my sister who married, it
seems

seems, his dearest friend, is patronized by him and the Mortimers, and taught to expect she shall speedily be united to the *ci-devant* object of both our regards, your Lordship's disrespectful and undutiful nephew.

Lord Mex. All this I am acquainted with, my Lady, and have forbid Conyers ever appearing in the presence of either of us. As for Miss Dormer, be her ingratitude on her own head; henceforward I think I may presume to say, she is no longer a relation of either your Ladyship or myself. But, in order perfectly to clear up the mystery of this business, I have desired to speak to Mr. Lascelles on the subject; I strongly suspect him to be privy to every circumstance; and expect to see him every instant. After hearing his account of the whole transaction, your Ladyship and myself will be better enabled to make up our final determination on the whole of this wretched affair.

Enter a Servant introducing Mr. Lascelles.

Mr. Las. My Lord, your most obedient servant; Lady Mexington, I hope I have the honor to see your Ladyship in perfect health. I have obeyed your Lordship's summons the instant I could put myself in a condition to make my appearance.

Lord Mex. The Countess of Mexington and myself, Mr. Lascelles, are fully sensible of the obligations we are under for your thus early compliance with their request.

Mr. Las. I beg your Lordship to favor me with your commands.

Lord Mex. Simply, Sir, to answer a few questions I shall have the honor of proposing to you. You are, I understand, Sir, the intimate friend of my now justly discarded nephew; Was you, or was you not, Mr. Lascelles, privy to his intended refusal of my commands to pay his addresses to Miss Danvers?

vers (because he had so indiscreetly given away his heart where he was morally certain it would not meet the sufferance of Lady Mexington and myself)? Answer me directly, Sir, without equivocation, and as a man of honor.

Mr. Las. My Lord, until your question is conveyed in terms more consonant to my character as a Gentleman, I shall make no answer to it at all.

Lord Mex. Pardon me, Mr. Lascelles, I mean no offence; but you know, Sir, the dignity of my blood, and will allow for its ebullition on a subject where I conceive the honor of my family is so intimately concerned: but to my question, Sir.

Mr. Las. Well then, to answer you sincerely, my Lord, I have long had the honor to reckon your nephew as my dearest friend; since our first connexion at Eton our intimacy has daily increased, and I am certain nothing but the death of one of us will ever dissolve it; but although we have so long confided in each other, yet it was not till very lately that I knew his heart was unalterably devoted to Miss Dormer.

Lord Mex. You knew of this improper attachment then, Sir you acknowledge?

Mr. Las. I did, my Lord, and encouraged him to pursue it.

Lord Mex. Heaven and earth Mr. Lascelles! and how could you?

Mr. Las. Faith, my Lord, because I saw nothing improper in it. The young lady was perfectly amiable, and, in point of family, being so nearly allied to Lady Mexington, could not possibly bring any disgrace upon your Nephew; I therefore urged him to obey the dictates of his heart, being well assured he could no where else form a connexion so likely to be productive of his happiness, which, however, I am certain would never have taken place, as Miss Dormer, although she always acknowledged her in-

violable affection for Mr. Conyers, constantly refused to yield to his most pressing solicitations, until they were sanctioned by the consent of your Lordship and Lady Mexington.

Lady Mex. Why really, my Lord, what Mr. Lascelles has just now mentioned does in some degree mitigate the offence. Fanny's conduct in this refusal has merit, and her family is every way illustrious; the blood of the Darvilles your Lordship well knows—

Lord Mex. Is purity itself, my Lady; but then this horrid refusal of the General's; heavens and family honors! to have it hawked about the world, that the nephew of Lord Mexington, the heir of his title and fortunes, when proposed by himself, should be rejected by any family in Europe, is more than the philosophy of my disposition can sustain.

Lady Mex. I share equally with your Lordship in this almost indelible disgrace; and, Mr. Lascelles, I cannot help thinking you would have acted a more dignified part, had you acquainted Lord Mexington or myself with this unfortunate opinion of our Nephew.

Mr. Las. Pardon me, Madam, I was the confidant of my friend, not the betrayer of his secrets; but permit me to be a peace-maker in this business: I flatter myself, by the softness of your Ladyship's looks, that your resentment against your charming niece is in some degree abated; let me implore you, Madam, to be a mediatrix with his Lordship (a successful one you must be) to give his consent to their union; deprived of which, even in the possession of each other, they would not enjoy perfect happiness.

Lady Mex. Really, Mr. Lascelles, you are a most persuasive advocate; but, my Lord, your opinion must regulate my conduct.

Lord Mex. Why I must own, Madam, the persuasion of Mr. Lascelles, and the pleasure he seems

to

to take in his friend's interest, hath in some measure modulated the severity of my first intentions; should your Ladyship join your powerful intercession in their favor, I believe I should scarce be able to withhold my consent. But of that hereafter. Your sentiments, Mr. Lascelles, do you the highest honor, and I look upon it as one proof of the worthiness of my nephew that he has acquired such a friend.

Mr. Las. The continuance of your nephew's friendship, my Lord, with the regard of yourself and Lady Mexington, will ever be esteemed the first happiness of my life.

Lord Mex. Which regard, Mr. Lascelles, I assure you, you entirely possess. But now, Sir, may I further trespass on your kindness, and, as the friend of Lady Mexington and myself, request you immediately to see Mr. Conyers, use your own discretion as to what has passed in this conversation, and you may hint to him, that there is some degree of probability that he may again be received to the affection of his uncle.

Mr. Las. My Lord, your commission does me honor, and, with the utmost pleasure, I directly obey it.

[*Exit Lascelles, bowing.*]

Lady Mex. Upon my word, I admire this Mr. Lascelles exceedingly; his deportment is such that it would by no means disgrace the peerage. But now, my Lord, we must, as your Lordship justly observed, take this unhappy business into our maturest consideration. Your Lordship sees that it is through your Nephew alone your lineal honors can descend to posterity, and heaven forbid that the title of Mexington (though, indeed, there was a time when I hoped that would be only a secondary honor in our house) should be extinct.

Lord Mex. Why, indeed, my Lady, I am afraid the Dukedom, which for so many years I think I

had a right to obtain, from my refusal of conditions which I was not disposed to gratify, is now withheld from us for ever; but then, again, I should think that my present title is a splendid one, and that I am still in possession of a fortune superior, and rank nobler than most in the kingdom. This must and shall be continued, my Lady! and as neither of our bloods can be derogated by the alliance, I am determined to give the hand of my Nephew to your Ladyship's Niece, Miss Dormer.

Lady Mex. As I think it will promote the general happiness, I perfectly subscribe to your Lordship's generous intentions; but they must return to Mexington house immediately.

Lord Mex. Certainly, Lady Mexington. My connexion with General Danvers is dissolved for ever.

Enter Servant.

Serv. General Danvers and Mr. Mortimer desire to have the honor of seeing your Lordship.

Lord Mex. I am not at home. What can they possibly come for?

Lady Mex. Oh see them, by all means, my Lord; with some apology, most assuredly.

Enter General Danvers and Mr. Mortimer.

Gen. Dan. My dear Lord Mexington, I cannot bear your resentment; and am, therefore, come (when I trust your Lordship is cooler than when we last parted) to request a renewal of your friendship, and to assure you (what my friend will corroborate) that had not my daughter been for years designed the future wife of Captain Neville, no alliance in the world would have been so grateful to me as that of your Lordship's; and be assured I speak my real sentiments when I say I should have thought myself highly honoured in uniting my daughter to Mr. Conyers, who, to his own merit and accomplishments, would have

have added the powerful inducement of being recommended by your Lordship and Lady Mexington.

Mr. Mort. The General's word requires no justification, my Lord, or I could vouch I have long known his intentions respecting the marriage of Miss Danvers.

Lady Mex. My dear Lord, this excuse of the General's is so noble, and has been made to your Lordship in so energetic a manner, that must, entirely, I think, do away every trace of your Lordship's resentment.

Lord Mex. It has, my Lady. General, give me your hand; you and Mr. Mortimer have highly honoured me by this visit, and I sincerely hope that our future lives will be passed on terms of the strictest friendship with each other.

Lady Mex. Permit me to congratulate you all on the happy termination of this business. But now let us advert a little to the situation of our young people.

Enter Benson with a Packet, which he delivers to Lord Mexington.

Benson. This packet, my Lord, I was just now ordered carefully to deliver into your Lordship's own hand.

Lord Mex. (taking the Packet and perusing the superscription) How is this? "To his Grace the Duke of Powerscourt." What can this possibly mean? *(opens it with eagerness, and reads the Letter.)*

" My dear Lord,

" The inclosed paper testifies that
 " the patent for raising your Lordship to the Duke-
 " dom which you have so long solicited, and which
 " your fortune and merits so eminently deserve, is
 " at length passed, and I have the extreme satis-
 " faction to congratulate your Lordship on being
 " now Duke of Powerscourt, a rank and title which
 " I am certain the virtues of Lady Mexington and
 " yourself

“ yourself will dignify and adorn. This matter,
 “ though, certainly long in your Grace’s expectation,
 “ has been some time in suspension; it is, however,
 “ but justice to inform your Grace, you entirely owe
 “ the accomplishment of your wishes, at this instant,
 “ to the unremitting endeavours, and powerful soli-
 “ citations of your kinsman, General Danvers.
 “ With every sentiment of esteem for your Grace
 “ and the Duchess, I have the honor to be

“ Your Grace’s most faithful

“ and devoted Servant

“ ARUNDEL.”

Lady Mex. Your Lordship seems surprised; may I presume to enquire into the contents of—

Lord Mex. Surpris’d my Lady;—Good God! read this from our friend Lord Arundel, and see the confirmation of the patent which elevates me to the Dukedom I have so long desired; and this I owe entirely to the influence of my noble friend and relation General Danvers. How, General, shall I convey to you the sentiments of my heart for this exalted proof of your regard?

Gen. Dan. By never mentioning it more. Long may your Grace enjoy the title which my feeble exertions have by chance accelerated.

Duchess. Dear General Danvers is there no way to shew a sense of the obligations we have received?

Gen. Dan. If your Graces would return with Mr. Mortimer and myself, and give your consent to the union of Mr. Conyers and Miss Dormer I shall consider myself as a thousand times overpaid for the little service I have had it in my power to perform.

Duke. Dear General every wish of yours shall be instantly complied with. It gives me, however, infinite pleasure to shew I was not actuated by interested motives. Before I knew the obligations I was under, Lady Mexington and myself had commissioned Mr.

Lascelles

Lascelles to carry the returning olive branch to our nephew, and assure him we meant not to be inexorable.

Gen. Dan. The nobleness of these sentiments, my Lord, gives happiness to us all; but will your Grace wave ceremony, and, by accepting a part of Mr. Mortimer's coach, alleviate the cruel suspense the young couple at present experience.

Duke. Dear General, with pleasure I attend you, and I am sure the Duchess will be happy in shewing every proof of tenderness to her niece, who at this instant, when I reflect on the delicacy of her situation, must be, I fear, very much dejected.

Duchess. I long to repair the injury I did my beloved Adeline, by endeavouring to make her daughter the happiest of women. On you, Mr. Mortimer, I depend for a kind reception from your Lady; happy shall I be hereafter to share in her esteem. To Miss Danvers I must beg her Father's introduction, and have already allotted her a considerable place in my heart. Come then, let us no longer delay our immediate attendance on the beloved party now under Mrs. Mortimer's protection.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene the Last.

Enter Mrs. Mortimer, Mr. Lascelles, Captain Neville, and Miss Danvers, Mr. Conyers and Miss Dormer.

Mr. Las. Well, Conyers, I have told you our whole conference, do you and Miss Dormer, therefore make yourselves perfectly easy, and I have no doubt but all things will end happily.

Mrs. Mort. Dear Mr. Lascelles, so I have repeatedly told them, and am sure reconciliation will be the

the order of the day ; but it will not do, Sir, they are pleased in being completely miserable, and (as my choice Nephew and his sweet Matilda there, did for a time) prefer the gloomy paths of difficulty and despondency, to the broad road of happiness, which so evidently lies before them.

Miss Dan. Ah, my dear Madam, you too early discovered my secret, and now punish me for not preserving it better.

Capt. Nev. For my part I never had one, at least, that I could keep from the penetrating observation of my respectable Mrs. Mortimer.

Miss Dor. But consider, my dearest Madam, how different my situation is from that of Miss Danvers ; she was authorised, by the tenderest of parents, to confess her inclination for Captain Neville, whilst I, under the severest interdiction, was forbidden to speak to, listen to, or even think of the sole object of my regard and affection.

Mr. Con. My dearest Fanny, you alone constitute my earthly happiness ; and, be the consequence what it may, no power shall separate us.

Mrs. Mort. Well, well, my young folks, have patience, I hear Mr. Mortimer's coach stop at the door. As I live, he is handing out Lady Mexington,

Miss Dor. I must beg permission to retire, I cannot bear the anger and scorn I am sure I shall receive from her Ladyship.

Mrs. Mort. By no means, my dear. By Lady Mexington's condescension in coming here, I am confident this is the last uneasiness you will have to support ; so you must stand it out whilst I go to meet her Ladyship.

[Exit Mrs. Mortimer.]

Miss Dan. Let me persuade you, my beloved friend, to exert your whole fortitude on this occasion, Lady Mexington alone should dread this introduction.

Miss

Miss Dormer appears in great agitation, supported by Miss Danvers and Mr. Conyers.

Enter the Duchess led by Gen. Danvers, the Duke of Powerscourt leading Mrs. Mort. followed by Mr. Mort.

Mrs. Mort. With the greatest satisfaction I congratulate your Graces on your accession to a dignity which Mr. Mortimer hath just acquainted me with; but now permit me, Madam, to introduce you to a niece who is absolutely miserable until received once more into your Grace's favour and affection.

The Duchess with the utmost tenderness embraces Miss Dormer.

Duch. My dearest niece, my heart acknowledges you as the child of my tenderest affection, and as such, in future, you shall ever be regarded; cease, then, these tears, my beloved girl, and may you never hereafter have occasion to shed another.

Gen. Dan. Come, my amiable Miss Dormer, let me have the pleasure of again introducing you to your most estimable friends: Lord and Lady Mexington, from the goodness of their hearts, aided by the kind interference of Mr. Lascelles, were already determined to pardon every thing, and give their full consent to your union; which now, as the Duke and Duchess of Powerscourt, they, in the amplest manner confirm, and fully authorise me to assure you, that they look forward with infinite satisfaction to the completion of your mutual happiness.

Duke. Yes, my dear Nephew, I ratify in the name of the Duchess and myself, every word the General has uttered, and with equal pride and pleasure bestow you on my niece, whose merits have too long been neglected by her aunt and myself.

Mr. Con. Overwhelm'd as I am, by repeated obligations to your Grace, I can only say, that even united with Miss Dormer I could not have enjoyed perfect happiness under the displeasure of my noble benefactors.

Miss Dormer kneeling to the Duchess.

Miss Dor. How shall I express my gratitude! Pardon every error I have committed, every command I have disobeyed, and particularly my greatest crime in not resisting an inclination it was not in my power to withstand; but if passing the remainder of my life in every act of duty to the Duke and yourself, and in endeavouring to make Conyers happy, will insure your forgiveness, my unremitting endeavours shall be to obtain it.

Duchess. Rise, my beloved Niece, and henceforth be assured of my truest affection. Believe me, Fanny, you have never really offended me; when I appeared to be most angry I was ever struck with the soft meekness of your disposition; besides had you given me real cause of offence, as Duchess of Powerscourt I shall be entirely regardless of any little neglects or indiscretions you formerly were led into against the Countess of Mexington.

Gen. Dan. Then the only thing we have now to do is to compleat the happiness of these young people, and with your Grace's approbation we will immediately set about it.

Duke. My inclinations, General, are entirely subservient to yours.

Duchess. My dear Miss Danvers we have been so entirely absorbed in self interest that I have scarce had time to wish you and Captain Neville joy, and to assure you, that you will very considerably share in my affection for the future.

Miss Dan. Your Grace does me the highest honor.

Duchess. You and I, Mrs. Mortimer, shall have infinite satisfaction in chaperoning these young ladies into public, which at present, beautiful as they both are, they are entirely unacquainted with; and you know, my dear Madam, that a proper introduction into life, with a becoming initiation into the manners of the polite world, can only give that requisite polish which is so extremely necessary to procure the general admiration and regard they are both so eminently formed to obtain.

Mrs. Mort. And which nothing is so likely to insure as the countenance and instruction of your Grace.

Duchess. Pardon me, Madam, I am convinced the assistance of Mrs. Mortimer is equally necessary. Do you know, Madam, I am really shocked at the extreme awkwardness of our young people of fashion in general. I absolutely declare to you, Mrs. Mortimer, that except the royal family, and five or six young ladies, my Lord's relations or my own, I scarce know a single young woman fit to appear decently in the circle, sit in a box at the Opera, or enter a drawing room with a tolerable degree of elegance.

Mr. Mort. Your Grace is too strict, and too great an adept yourself, in every mode of good breeding, to admit the least want of attention to its minutest forms in others.

Duchess. Not at all, Mr. Mortimer, I am ready to make every allowance; Sir, but it seems to be the barbarism of the present age; it was not so a few years since. I attribute it entirely to that egregious *mauvaise honte* which at present so universally prevails. Nay, it is the same on the Continent, Sir. I declare to you, Mr. Mortimer, I was there a few years since with my Lord, and the extreme want of etiquette was such that I could form a connexion with only two persons, one of whom was a crowned head and the other the Margravine of Grimsburgh.

Mr. Mort. A few such examples as your Grace are wanted in this country to form a school of elegance and propriety which would do infinite honour to it.

Duchess. I am sure, Sir, your politeness could never receive any addition from the construction of such a seminary; but we seem entirely to engross the conversation; let me request you all to return with the Duke and myself to Mexington House, where we shall call for new subjects and the conversation become more general.

Mrs. Mort. There your Grace must pardon me, we hope for the honor of your passing this evening with us where you are.

Duchess. Dear Madam, I assent with pleasure. Well, General, we all now seem to be completely happy; and in order to keep us so, and render your daughter's felicity permanent, I conclude you will retire from public service; Captain Neville will yield up his commission, and dedicate his future life to his beautiful bride, and the company of his numerous friends.

Gen. Dan. As for myself, Madam, after forty years spent in the service of my country, and too much exhausted to serve it with energy any longer, I leave it, with reluctance, to abler defenders. What Captain Neville means to do depends entirely on his own opinion and my daughter's.

Capt. Nev. If then, dear Sir, I have your consent together with my uncle Mortimer's, to form an opinion of my own, it is still to continue a soldier. Never let it be said that Neville, brought up, and introduced into the field by the most gallant of men, shall retire from the service of his King and Country, whilst the one commands, and the other requires his assistance. But what says my Matilda? If she sanctifies my wish by her approbation I shall be supremely happy.

Miss Dan. What shall I say, my Neville, daughter as I am to a soldier, and affianced wife of one? Your Matilda will never be an obstacle to your progress in the paths of glory. Go then wherever your duty calls, but remember when you meet your enemy in the field, my life is attached to your own.

Gen. Dan. Neville, observe but the affectionate caution of my daughter, and continue to act as you have done, and you are indeed a soldier. I shall no longer regulate your actions, but let me call to your example the noble commander we both fought under in India—often have I seen his firm arm lifted against the enemy of his country; his dauntless intrepidity at that moment hath inspired even timidity itself with emulation; the battle over, I have seen him

him visiting his afflicted prisoners in the hospital; I have seen him personally administering to their relief, and considering them as no longer his enemies but his fellow soldiers in distress; also I have seen him exercising the highest offices of humanity, receiving, with the utmost benevolence, the infant hostages of a subdued prince; shielding them from every insult, protecting their inexperienced youth, and shewing them, in himself, a noble example of that humanity and magnanimity wanted by their misguided father; lastly, as Governor General, I have seen him promoting the felicity of millions; during his residence, no odious monopoly ever prevailed, no exterminating famine was ever known, no corruptive present was permitted to be accepted, and all speculation was done away, whilst an honourable confidence in man to man regulated every transaction of business. This was an example for the world to follow, and which I ardently wish you, my son (as far as your limited power will allow) to pursue.

Duke. Dear General, we are infinitely indebted to you for this noble description of your late Vicegerent, who seems to have been delegated by heaven itself to repair the injuries the Asiatic world had formerly sustained; and I feel a particular pride in knowing this exalted character is a member of the peerage.

Mr. Las. Among that illustrious body, my Lord, as in the other house, you will find many whose examples are worthy of the strictest emulation; but virtue belongs to no rank, and take the body of our countrymen in general, I believe there can be no where greater or more numerous instances of it found than among the people of England.

Mr. Mort. I heartily coincide with you, Mr. Lascelles, and as, without vanity, I think I may say we are a deserving people, so I am confident we are a happy one. From our innate love of freedom, some little doubts and apprehensions will, at times, unavoidably occur, but we know the main bulwark

of our constitution is admirable, and not to be shaken; and may it continue so as long as the silver waves of Neptune encircle this happy island, in defence of which I am confident there is not a man within it who would not, with pleasure, expend his fortune, or shed his dearest blood. Added to which we are governed by a monarch who in his subjects' happiness ever finds his own.

Mrs. Mort. My dear husband, I have listened for this last hour at least with the most passive, though now almost exhausted attention, to General Danvers and yourself; but consider, Gentlemen, neither of you are in the house where you may talk for hours without interruption except from that personage whom at present I most infinitely long to represent in my own proper person.

Mr. Mort. Meaning the Speaker I presume.

Mrs. Mort. To be sure I do, Sir; an office you yourself must allow me infinitely qualified for, and which I have been too long unjustly excluded from. Re-assuming my right, therefore, I call both the General and yourself to order, and will no longer permit a monopoly of conversation, which is an absolute infraction on our sex's charter: I could say a great deal more on the subject but it is time to adjourn, and I doubt we have already trespassed on their Graces' patience. I shall of course keep the chair for the evening; instead of speaker I shall commence toast-master, and the first specimen of my abilities shall be, LONG LIVE THE KING; and my second, to shew our inclination ever to retain our beloved soldiers among us, MAY ENGLAND SOON ENJOY THAT FIRST OF BLESSINGS, A SPEEDY, LASTING, AND HONORABLE PEACE.

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EPILOGUE,

BY MISS DANVERS.

[For the following Epilogue the Author of the Play stands indebted to a Gentleman to whom he has the happiness of being very nearly allied, and whose long-continued friendship he regards as his greatest honor and most peculiar felicity.]

x 2 B. Cooper

SOFT you—a word or two before we part,
Warm from the impulse of a throbbing heart,
By me the Author makes his last appeal
To those who reason, and to those who feel;
Looks for indulgence to the critic's eye,
And courts the chearing smile of sympathy.

'Tis your's at length my fortune to decide,
Your guardian hands must give away the bride;
Let these your vivifying plaudits give,
And bid the GENEROUS ATTACHMENT live.

Who does not prize a Soldier—such as mine,
Whose warm attentions veil no base design;
In love sincere—in martial dangers brave,
Prepar'd alike to conquer or to save?
With guards like him let Britain cease to dread,
And Gallic faction hide her guilty head.

Who would not yield to love's—to duty's claim,
When every virtue gilds a parent's name;
When honor, truth, benevolence combine,
And round his brow in rays of glory shine?
Such is our General—but on British ground
Say can his noble archetype be found?
Yes—let the sons of India's rescu'd plain
In shouts attest, our author does not feign:
Yes—in the highest military sphere
Virtues like his with genuine grace appear;
They glow in royal York's benignant breast,
By public love and love domestic blest;
His kind attention soothes the soldier's toil,
And Heaven repays him with an angel's smile.

Hail wedded love! thou source of bliss below,
Which none but virtuous hearts can hope to know;

Whither to have thy influence shall I roam,
Where shall I seek thee, if not found at home?

Restraint expels thee from the tyrant's arms,
And lawless freedom slights thy modest charms.

Ye British Fair—by every beauty grac'd,

Improv'd by virtue, and refin'd by taste;

Who manly sense with female softness blend,

To form the wife, the mistress, and the friend;

(If aught as truth my sisters can receive

That flattering man would teach them to believe)

'Tis your's the power of tenderness to prove,

And make your native land the land of love;

Bid every rank his mild dominion own,

And mark his noblest pattern on the throne.

Illustrious pair! in British hearts ye reign,

Nor shall your bright example shine in vain;

From you the heav'n-born blessing shall descend,

When all your earthly joys and glories end.

May bliss like your's our favour'd Prince await,

And equal concord grace his royal state!

Blest in his Princess, in his offspring blest,

By wisdom guided, and by love carest.

A nation's weal his chief, his only care,

Heir to your crown, to all your virtues heir.

May each succeeding year his joys increase,

And future Brunswicks rule the realm in peace!

Tho' Gallic clouds obscure the regal ray,

Thus patriot Britons feel, and hope, and pray.

They have not dar'd, with philosophic pride,

To spurn at rule, and murmur at a guide;

They have not learnt insanely to despise

All that is reverenc'd by the good and wise.

True to their God, to pledg'd allegiance true,

They honor him to whom respect is due:

Loyal, tho' free—to public virtue just,

They love the Prince who venerates his trust.

Let reeling France her impious ditties sing,

True Britons still exclaim—"GOD SAVE THE KING."

